

ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

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THE TALE OF AUNT MARGARET'S TROUBLE.

IN SIX WEEKLY PORTIONS. SECOND PORTION.

CHAPTER III.

AUNT and Uncle Gough were neither rich nor grand people, though the Gable House was, as I have said, the noblest-looking dwelling in Willborough. The house was not my uncle's own property, but he held a long lease of it. It belonged to some great county magistrate: a baronet whose very name I have forgotten, though he was a mighty person in Willborough, and held property for miles around it. But socially speaking, he was as far removed from our household as if he had lived in Kamschatka. His steward, Mr. Lee, we knew slightly, and saluted when we met him in the street on market-days; but he was so solemn and grand a person that he always chilled me into awe-struck silence, though he often condescended to smile and speak to us girls as we grew up. Once he told uncle that Miss Anna had a monstrous sprightly air and a fine shape, and would turn all the young fellows' heads, by-and-by. "And did he say nothing of our sweet Madge?" asked my aunt, when the flattering words had been reported at home, and had been blushed and smiled at. Aunt Gough, dear tender-hearted soul, feared that I might feel slighted; but, in truth, it had never occurred to me as possible that the pompous Mr. Lee should have noticed or remembered me at all. "Well, well, well," said my uncle, as he drew me to him with so sweet and fond a smile that I felt my eyes fill with tears, "I'm not sure that I want Mr. Lee to make pretty speeches about Madge. He can tell which of them has the brightest eyes; of that he's a good enough judge, so don't think I want to rob you of your compliment, Anna. But if Madge won't turn heads, she'll creep into hearts; won't she, my dear?" He passed his hand softly over my hair as he spoke. I want to tell the truth, and I must confess that just for a moment I felt a sort of irritable impatience at being told I should not turn heads. Why should I not turn heads, as well as another? I half withdrew myself from the touch of the fatherly hand that was caressing me. But the little unworthy

feeling passed directly, and in an instant I had kissed my uncle, and we were all laughing together at Anna's assurance that she would begin to practise the turning process on Mr. Lee himself, the very next time she saw him.

The opportunity was not long in coming, but I think Anna had forgotten her vow; at any rate, I don't believe she tried to fulfil it. It was a fortnight after uncle had told us of Mr. Lee's compliment, on the next market-day but one, that my sister and I, coming homeward up the High-street, saw before us my uncle's tall figure, walking side by side with the portly Mr. Lee. They were talking earnestly together, and going at a much slower pace than we were, so we soon overtook them. The foot pavement of the Willborough High-street was very narrow: so narrow that two persons walking abreast needed its whole width. We could not pass my uncle and Mr. Lee by stepping off the pavement, because on market-days the roadway was filled with country folk. Vendors of poultry, eggs, butter, fruit, and vegetables, stood all along the edge of the causeway. Great carts, piled with country produce, or laden with a ruddy-cheeked farmer's family, jolted ponderously along, the waggoner whip in hand steering his unwieldy horses amidst the crowd as well as he could; and the docile brutes seeming to understand his uncouth gees, and woos, and wuts, with almost human intelligence. Now and again, a prosperous yeoman would ride by, his well-fed cob chafing and fretting at the enforced slowness of the pace. Then there were stout servant-girls with heavy baskets, travelling pedlars hoarse with vaunting their wares, a blind fiddler or doleful ballad-singer, farm-labourers slow and bewildered of aspect, busy shopkeepers, whooping schoolboys, barking dogs, cackling hens, and I don't know what else.

We came close behind my uncle and his companion, and had even walked some paces at their heels, before they were aware of our being near them. "Yes, Mr. Gough," said the steward, with pompous emphasis, "so it is arranged. He will have the advantage of my name, position, and connexion, and I think on the whole we may expect a fair start—a fair start. If a young man is put in the way of making a fair start, I consider it to be his own fault if he does not—if he does not, in fact, start fair."

"Quite so, quite so, Mr. Lee," returned our guardian, with a pleasant laugh. "And I make no doubt but the young gentleman will do you credit."

Here Anna, raising herself on tiptoe, stretched her arm over uncle's shoulder and thrust a bunch of sweet herbs we had been buying for home use, under his nose. He and Mr. Lee stopped and turned round; as they did so, a third gentleman, who had been walking a little in advance of them, and whom we had not seen until now, stopped too, on hearing my uncle's exclamation. "What now!" cried uncle, his face lighting up into smiles, as it always did whenever he saw either of us, "saucy Nanny! I might have known it was one of your pranks. Fie, miss! Ain't you ashamed? Here's Mr. Lee blushing for you."

I don't think Mr. Lee was blushing, but I know Anna was, and laughing too, and looking very pretty. Mr. Lee shook hands with us both, with much condescension; and as we were blocking up the pathway, and were being hustled and pushed this way and that, Uncle Gough bade us two walk on, and said: "Perhaps Mr. Lee and Mr. Horace will be good enough to come to the Gable House and see aunt, and give us the pleasure of drinking a toast to Mr. Horace's success and prosperity, in our homely fashion, after dinner." Then the third gentleman, who had been in advance of them, was presented to us by Mr. Lee as "my son Horace, young ladies;" and my uncle's invitation having been accepted, we all proceeded homeward. The two elders resumed their talk immediately, and chatted together all the way. But we young ones walked shyly side by side in silence, until we reached the old iron gateway of the Gable House.

That was the first time I ever saw Horace Lee.

CHAPTER IV.

It is difficult for me now, to separate that first impression from my subsequent knowledge of Horace, but I am nearly sure that I liked him from the first, although he was shy and silent, and a little stiff, perhaps. I remember, quite certainly, feeling pleased (though I should have been puzzled to say why) that the younger Mr. Lee was not very like his father. Just the colour of the bluish-grey eyes, and the crisp curliness of the hair, were alike in the two. But Horace had not his father's massive jaw and coarse mouth, and he had altogether a gentle wistful kind of expression when his face was in repose, which I supposed he inherited from his dead mother.

Uncle Gough stepped forward, and led the way beneath the porch of famous memory, and into the hall; and we four, Anna and I and the two Mr. Lees, followed in a somewhat pell-mell fashion. But I noticed that when we came to the dining-room door, and my sister and I paused an instant, old Mr. Lee pushed on, in his pompous self-absorbed way, and entered before us; and that a slight look of

annoyance came across the young man's face as he drew back with a formal little bow, to allow us to pass. Dear Aunt Gough was the soul of hospitality, and I believe if uncle had brought home half Willborough to dinner, she would have felt no more regret than might be occasioned by anxiety lest they should not all be comfortable and well provided for. She looked a little surprised when Mr. Lee walked in, for he had never been on intimate terms at the Gable House; but she welcomed him and his son with the sweet simple kindness that cannot be counterfeited. And then, during dinner, we heard how it was that Mr. Horace was in Willborough, and what uncle had meant by speaking of a toast to his success and prosperity.

"Mr. Lee's son is coming to settle among us here, old woman," said my uncle to my aunt. "He has been studying engineering and land-surveying away in Birmingham, with Mr. — Mr. —"

"Topps," said the elder Mr. Lee, seeing that uncle paused for the name. "Topps. A very eminent man, madam. Very eminent man. And expensive, very expensive. But eminence is ever expensive." The old gentleman looked round, as though he had said something highly gratifying, and expected us to appear pleased. Horace kept his eyes on the tablecloth.

"Yes," resumed my uncle, "Mr. Horace has been studying with Mr. Topps. I am sure that Mr. Horace has profited by his opportunities; and his course of study being now finished, I am glad to say he is coming to give us Willborough folk the advantage of his skill."

"I have bought him a share in the old-established business of Phillips and Rotherwood," put in Mr. Lee. "Mr. Phillips is about retiring, and there is an opening for a young man with moderate capital and a good connexion. I consider that I have done my duty by my son, in keeping before him from boyhood the advantage of a good connexion. And, if I may be allowed to say so, I think he will find a good connexion ready to receive him, and to respect him—for his father's sake."

"No doubt of that, sir," said Uncle Gough, after so short a silence that there scarcely seemed to have been a pause at all: "and to like him for his own."

Horace looked up at my uncle then, and thanked him with a smile so bright that it seemed to light up his face as if a ray of sunshine had fallen on it.

After that, we girls went away with my aunt, and left the gentlemen over their wine. They did not remain apart very long, for the Lees had a ten-mile drive to their home, and the days were shortening already at the approach of autumn. They came into the morning-room where we were sitting, to take leave of my aunt. Old Mr. Lee was a good deal flushed, and had been doing justice to my uncle's cellar. That was no uncommon circumstance in those days, but it was one we were unused to, for James Gough was the most temperate of men.

"Won't you stay and drink a dish of tea, sir?" asked my aunt, hospitably, though she looked a little fluttered as Mr. Lee took her hand and glared at her solemnly. He was not intoxicated, but he had taken enough to make him more prosy and pompous than usual.

"I thank you, madam, but 'tis a beverage I never partake of, and we are pressed for time. My horse and gig are awaiting us at the Blue Bell, but I could not depart without expressing my best thanks for your hospitality. Horace, why do you not join your acknowledgments to mine? I am surprised at your negligence."

"Oh, pray!" said poor aunt, quite earnestly, "I'm sure there's no need, none in the world. It's a great pleasure to us to have entertained the young gentleman in our homely fashion."

"But there is need, madam," persisted Mr. Lee. "There *is* need; pardon me for contradicting you, but I am a great stickler for the observance of those polite forms which—which—gild the wheels of life. Likewise, I was brought up in the observance of the utmost courtesy, especially towards the gentler sex. You may deem me punctilious and over-precise, young man, but in my day it was thought no part of good manners to leave a lady's house without a parting compliment. Courtesy, courtesy and consideration for the fair sex, even in the most trifling matters, has been my rule through life."

I couldn't help thinking of the little scene at the dining-room door, and I had an uncomfortable idea that Mr. Horace was thinking of the same thing, and I felt my cheeks grow provokingly scarlet. Mr. Lee went on some time longer, and made quite a speech, which, however, seemed to be spoken rather at us than to his son; but at last it came to an end, and he took a dignified leave of me, and an admiring one of Anna, paying her several high-flown compliments, which she received very graciously and with much self-possession. Horace made each of us his stiff little bow. I fancy his father's paternal admonition had not tended to put him more at his ease. But no bashfulness could have helped thawing under the influence of Aunt Gough's genial motherly manner, and the young man took her hand, and bade her farewell, quite cordially.

"I hope we shall see you at the Gable House very often," we heard my uncle saying, as he accompanied his guests down-stairs. "You'll be a neighbour, you know, Mr. Horace. If you can put up with humdrum old-fashioned folks like us, you will always find a warm welcome and a cool tankard."

I have been sure since, that old Mr. Lee had accosted my uncle that market-day, and introduced his son to him, expressly that he might receive some such invitation, and secure a footing in the Gable household. I know not if he had any further plan in his mind at that time; but it was of itself no trifling advantage to a new comer in Willborough to be known as a welcome guest at the Gable

House: an advantage which the baronet's steward was very sensible of, notwithstanding his boasts about his good connexion. We had never been honoured by so much of Mr. Lee's company before that day, and I think we were all tacitly agreed that it was a luxury we should not care to indulge in very often. But my uncle had taken a liking to the son, and said over and over again, "He's a nice lad. A well-looking lad, and well-mannered, though he's strange among us as yet. But where in the world he gets his shyness from, the Lord knows! His mother must have been a gentle creature. I never knew her; but he looks like a lad who has had a nice mother."

The autumn days grew shorter and shorter, the faint smell of dead leaves was in the air, and the pale evening sky, pricked here and there with a spark of tremulous lustre, began to show the delicate tracery of leafless boughs relieved against its faint western yellow. By that time, Horace Lee was as familiar an apparition beneath my uncle's roof as old Stock himself. His shyness wore off as he grew intimate with us, and we found him to be a most pleasant companion, with a vein of almost boyish fun and merriment which especially delighted my uncle. A closer bond of good-fellowship between them revealed itself accidentally. James Gough was a north-countryman by birth and family. I cannot now explain—if, indeed, I ever did rightly know—what vicissitudes of fortune had brought him to dwell in our southern county; but I know he kept a warm corner in his heart for all that belonged to his dear Border land, and retained a clannish interest in his own far-away kinsfolk, even to cousins thrice removed. And, behold, one day it came out that Horace Lee's mother had been a Northumbrian, born and bred within twenty miles of my uncle's native place! Here was a pleasant discovery! Uncle Gough was never weary of questioning Horace about his dead mother, and rubbing up his own reminiscences of her family, the McNaghtens, until he ended by persuading himself that he must have known Mrs. Lee in early youth, though I am afraid it was inexorably proved by dates and figures that he could never have seen her. He would sit and talk for hours of the wild moorlands and the heathery solitudes he had tramped through when a boy, relating one adventure after another, until the northern burr would come back to his tongue, and the boyish sparkle into his eyes, and he would bid Anna sing some old Border ballad, and would sit listening with closed eyelids to her fresh thrilling tones, while his heart lived over again the days of auld lang syne, and the tears stole unchecked down his dear honest face.

Horace, too, would listen, charmed and attentive. Anna, who loved excitement and admiration as much as most girls conscious of their beauty, and accustomed to receive praise in no stinted measure, never threw so much power and pathos into her voice, or so much expression into her changing face, as when Horace varied the monotony of her home audience and

added novelty to the chorus of our familiar praises.

CHAPTER V.

MISS WOKENHAM was a frequent guest at this time at our fireside. She had made a confidence to us, and imparted a great piece of news, which we received half with pleasure and half with pain. The pleasure was occasioned by the hope that she would be happy, and the pain by the thought of losing her. Miss Wokenham was going to be married! And her husband was to take her out of Willborough, out of England, out of Europe, away across the salt sea as far as North America. I well remember the day when she first broke the news to us, and the comical struggle between crying and laughing which twitched her face all the time she was telling it. It was the afternoon of a half-holiday, one bright October day, when she walked into the parlour where Anna and I were sitting with Aunt Gough, who was half asleep over a perfect Arachne's web of fine-drawing. "Well, my mild-eyed Philosophy," said Miss Wokenham, greeting me with a kiss, which I had to stoop down to receive. (Almost every one of her pupils she distinguished by a nickname. Mine was Philosophy. Anna she always called Will-o'-the-wisp. "Well, mild-eyed Philosophy! And how are you? And how is dear aunt? I need not ask how *you* are, Will-o'-the-wisp, flashing and beaming brightly enough to lead a whole legion of unwary travellers astray, and mischievous enough to enjoy their floundering in the bog afterwards.")

She had always a quick lively manner; but she now spoke more rapidly than usual, and I, who knew her well, was certain she was fluttered and excited. She proved me to be right after a minute or two, when, seating herself on a broad low cushion just by Aunt Gough's knee, she clasped her hands tightly together, and said, abruptly, "I'm not used to tell lies, and I find I can't even act one well. It's of no use my coming in with a swagger and pretending to be quite at my ease; for I'm not at my ease, and you know I'm not at my ease; and I know that you know I'm not at my ease. I've come on purpose to tell you something, Mrs. Gough, and, as the dear girls are here, they may as well stay and hear it too, for they must know it sooner or later." She stopped an instant; but, seeing my aunt was about to speak, held up her hand to beg for silence, and went on with a plunge. "I am going to be married, and I know everything that can be said about the absurdity of such a step at my time of life. But I've balanced the disadvantages of living and dying a solitary lonely woman, without a human being to comfort me in sickness or sorrow, against the disadvantages of being laughed at for an old fool who threw away herself and her savings on the first frog-eating Frenchman who chose to hold up his finger to her, and I've come to the conclusion that I can endure ridicule in good company better than dreary old age by myself. So there's my great news, my dears,

and you needn't put any restraint on the expression of your feelings."

I never heard any one observe that Aunt Gough was remarkable for tact; but she certainly had a way of doing and saying the right thing at the right moment, which fell like soothing balm on the feelings of those around her. She was what it is now the fashion to call "sympathetic," in a greater degree than any one I have ever known. When little Miss Wokenham had finished her speech, and sat panting with her mouth twisted into a strained smile, and her bright black eyes brimming with tears, my aunt took her small hand gently in her own, and, patting it soothingly, said in her soft slow way, and without a trace of surprise in her voice: "And very good news it is, too, and a very sensible woman I think you for bringing it. And who is to be the good man, my love?"

The little woman jumped up and put her arms round my aunt's neck; giving way now to a gush of tears.

"That's the phrase," she said. "The very phrase, you dear, kind soul! I have been puzzling how I should call him—not in my own thoughts, you know, but to other people; and I felt that my lover, or my betrothed, was out of the question. Even husband gave me a kind of shock. It's so late to begin, you know. But 'good man,' that is the very phrase! Cozy and prosy, and yet kindly. And you don't think me a weak old idiot, do you?"

By-and-by the little woman calmed down and received our congratulations with her usual sensible self-possession. Then, by degrees, she told us the story of her wooing.

"It's M'sieu' de Beauguet, the French master—Old Bogie, you know, girls. I shall be Mrs. Old Bogie. Won't that be a good name for me? I'm sure I never thought of such a thing all the years I've known him, though we were always on the best of terms, until, about a month ago, he came to me and told me that he had had an unexpected piece of good fortune. 'I'm honestly glad of it, M'sieu'," said I; 'for I have a great respect for you, and I'm sure you deserve a smile from Fortune after bearing her frowns with such gallantry. But all the world knows how natural cheerful bravery is to a Frenchman.' My dears, I knew he had been very, very poor, and had fought a hard fight without asking aid from any one. So it was not a mere flourish on my part. He made me a grand bow, and said, 'I accept the compliment for my nation, mademoiselle, not for myself.' And then he told me that a distant relative, from whom he had had no expectations, had died in Canada, whither he had emigrated many years ago, and that this distant relative had left a small property and a farm near Quebec to his second cousin, Louis Auguste Philippe Emile de Beauguet. I wrote the names down afterwards, and that's how I remember them so glibly. And then he said that he had resolved to give up teaching and to go out and settle in Canada, where there was quite a colony of his country people; and he

was full of his plans and hopes. He didn't say a word about—about me—then. After he was gone, I don't mind owning that I felt much depressed. I was glad of his good prospects, really glad; and yet the idea of his going away all that distance, set me thinking how all those to whom I was attached, had other and stronger ties in the world—how the girls I had loved and taught grew up and passed out of my ken, generation after generation, vanishing away to be bright and pretty and clever in their distant homes, without a thought of their poor schoolmistress growing old by herself in her solitude. And I could not help thinking how other women took root, as it were, in the world, and bore fruit, and flourished into a green old age; whilst I stood alone, like some cold bare rock that had no beauty and little use, and must some day topple down and lie unregretted where it falls. I worked myself into such a dismal desolate frame of mind—more shame for me!—that I sat huddled up by the fire, crying and sobbing like a fool, when my little servant Kate came bounding into the room—you remember, Philosophy, my love, that we never *could* teach her to knock at the door—and brought me a great square letter, sealed with a coat of arms as big as a cheese-plate. It was from De Beaupet, of course. I'm not going to repeat it to you, don't be afraid, though I do know it by heart!—here a faint pink flush came over Miss Wokenham's delicate pale face—"but I may say it was a good letter, a very good letter. He said he felt alone in the world. He had been exiled from his country and all he held dear in it, for so many years, that France was more like a beautiful dream to him than a reality. He said a great deal more than he need have done about generous kindness and delicate sympathy on the part of your humble servant. I'm not going to pretend that I was not gratified; but he gave me more than my due, ten thousand times over. And then at last he said that if I would—there!—would cast in my lot with his, and go abroad with him, he would undertake that I should never repent my confidence. I took a week to consider about it, though I *think*—upon my word I am not sure—that my mind was made up from the first. And the end of it is that I've promised Lewis to take him for better, for worse, and to be a faithful kind companion to him, as well as I know how, so long as I have life and strength, and longer!"

After that day Miss Wokenham was a great deal at the Gable House. She had many preparations to make, and not too much time to get ready in. They were to be married in Liverpool, and to sail from that port in a merchant-man bound for Quebec. Monsieur de Beaupet had arranged all that. My aunt was a mistress of the craft of needlework, and Anna and I were fairly creditable scholars of so accomplished a teacher. So we all three were able to be useful to our old friend, and were happy to be allowed to help in the preparation of her wardrobe. The year was drawing to a

close by this time, and we stitched our way through the very core of the winter. Anna was a better sempstress than I, and her rapid fingers did good service in the manufacture of caps and aprons, and such other sober decorations as Miss Wokenham thought becoming her years. I worked neatly, but slowly; and our shrewd little bride elect was wont to say, "You're both dear, kind children; but, on a stitching emergency, give me Anna! Philosophy, with the very best intentions, stops at every cross-road to deliberate which turning she shall take. Will-o'-the-wisp keeps moving and does get over the ground, even though it be after a somewhat zig-zag fashion."

One cold bleak day we had all been busy in the morning-room from an early hour. When, in the sudden dusk, Miss Wokenham folded up her work and prepared to go homeward, my aunt stopped her, and insisted that she should stay to take tea and see my uncle.

"Horace will be here too, by-and-by," said Aunt Gough:—"young Mr. Lee, that is; but he seems so much one of us now, that I give the lad his christian name as natural as possible. And both of them will be so glad to see you."

"I should like to stay very much, but—but M'sieu' is to walk and meet me this evening, on the way home, and perhaps he'd be disappointed if I was not there."

"Perhaps he would?" echoed Aunt Gough. "Why, of course he would. But I will send some one to him with my respects, to say that you are here, and that I expect him to tea, if he will do us the pleasure of coming without ceremony."

Thus tempted, Miss Wokenham remained; and in due time "M'sieu'" arrived. We had seen him since the announcement of his engagement to our old schoolmistress, he having made a formal visit to my aunt, and having been presented by his affianced with all due observance and punctilio. But on this occasion he came on a more intimate footing, and without the panoply of etiquette and ceremony which it had pleased him to assume at first. "M'sieu'," without his mail of proof, was a very genial simple creature, with more of youthful freshness and romantic chivalry than I have often seen remaining in dashing cavaliers of half his years. He was a handsome man of fifty, with high clear-cut features, a florid skin, and the bluest of blue eyes.

"I take it very kind of you, Mr. Bogie," said my aunt, thus pronouncing his patronymic in all simplicity and good faith: "very kind, that you should have come to us in this friendly way, and I hope you'll be able to make yourself comfortable among us."

M'sieu' was at home in a minute.

"Ah, Elise!" said he, sitting cozily beside Miss Wokenham in the glow of the firelight, "dese is de scenes dat makes us ruggertet to leave England."

"Yes, indeed," she replied; "I can't commend your grammar, but your sentiment is

mine exactly.—I shall never get him to talk good English, Mrs. Gough, no more than he will ever teach me to pronounce good French; and *that's* speaking pretty strongly, as you would know if you had ever heard my attempts."

"She speaks very well, Madame," interrupted her bridegroom elect. "She can say 'oui,' and 'je t'aime,' and dat's so much French as I ask of her."

While we were laughing at this, and Miss Wokenham was protesting, with unnecessary vehemence, that she never said "je t'aime" to him, and was declaring that her friends would think she had taken leave of the last remnant of her senses if he went on in that way, my uncle and Horace Lee entered together.

"I picked up this young gentleman on my way home from Oatlands; or, rather, he picked up me, for I was afoot, and he driving in Rotherwood's gig. He has been surveying, and measuring and tramping through ploughed fields with a chain round his middle, or some such adornment, and——"

"—And he is not fit to come into the presence of ladies, Mrs. Gough," said Horace, finishing my uncle's speech. "But there was no refusing. You know how positive your lord and master can be on occasion."

"She know!" said my uncle, with a laugh. "O the sweet simplicity of three-and-twenty! As if a man was ever positive with his wife! But there, laddie, run to my room—you know the way—and polish yourself up before the candles come. No one has seen how you look yet."

It was quite dark, except just within range of the deep red glow from the hearth; for we all loved the dreamy fitful firelight, and had sat talking by it until the faint grey ghost of day, peeping in at the windows, had melted into the dense blackness of a winter night.

"Where's Nanny?" asked my uncle, suddenly, when he was seated in his arm-chair, enjoying a tankard of hot mulled wine which Aunt Gough had prepared with her own hands. Aunt was busy now, spicing a similar jorum for Mr. Lee, to warm him after the cold ploughed fields. "Where's Nanny? I haven't set eyes on her bonny face to-day."

She had been in the midst of us when they entered, but had vanished.

"Mademoiselle Anna was nearest de door when Monsieur Gough and Monsieur Lee came in, and she sl-slapped away wizout one word. I rummarark it," said M'sieu'.

"Slapped away! My goodness, Lewis! slipped, you mean—slipped away," cried Miss Wokenham, with comical consternation.

"Ah bien, slepted," said De Beauguet, with perfect good humour, smiling round on us all: "she slepted away quite quiet."

"We'll wake her up, wilful baggage!" said my uncle, who could not bear to miss Anna's bright face from the home circle, even for a moment. But almost as he spoke, the door opened, and my sister came in, followed by Horace Lee. "Why, whither did you two run

off together?" asked Uncle Gough. "Come here, sauce-box. This is a warm reception to give the master of the house, to run away as soon as he shows his face!"

"I overtook Miss Anna on the stairs as I was coming down, sir," Horace Lee explained, as he drew his chair up to the fire, next mine. I looked at my sister, and noticed that she had been to her room, to put on a scarlet ribbon which she sometimes wore in her dark curls, and which she had tied very archly and becomingly over one ear. Miss Wokenham, whose observation was singularly keen, noticed the ribbon too, but said nothing. Only I saw her watching Anna, with a curious intent look in her eyes, all the evening. After all, the little harmless bit of coquetry was nothing very wonderful, especially in Anna, who made no secret of the pleasure she took in her own good looks. She was very handsome. And as she sat on the soft white rug at my uncle's feet, with her pretty round arm leaning on his knee, and her animated face flushed and smiling, I thought I had never seen a bonnier sight, even in a picture. So thought uncle too, for he sat looking down upon her with a smile of positive enchantment.

"Sing us a song, Nanny," he said at last. "Let M'sieu' hear one of our Border ditties. Not scientific music, you know, M'sieu', but simple old songs, where the words and the tune seem to belong to each other, and to grow out of each other like the leaf and blossom of a flower. Sing us 'Sir Patrick Spence,' Nanny."

"Not if you call me Nanny," said she, pouting. "For my part, I don't know what is the use of one's godfathers and godmothers giving one a pretty name, if it's to be uglified into Nan and Nanny. I'd as soon be called Sukey."

"But pretty names are for pretty people. Don't you know that, Nanny? Well, there! Anna then. Don't flame up like a volcano, but sing us 'Sir Patrick Spence,' my bairn."

But Anna was ruffled, and would not sing Sir Patrick Spence, or any other song. Her temper was very capricious, and had been pampered by constant indulgence. My aunt and uncle began to coax her in their gentle loving way, and Monsieur De Beauguet added a polite hope that Mademoiselle would give him the great pleasure of hearing her charming voice; but she only shook her rich ringlets, and kept her eyes obstinately fixed on the floor.

"You ask her, Horace," said my uncle, on a sudden. "Try if she won't sing for you."

Horace was sitting silent beside me, and had not seemed to hear the discussion. He had a very absent way with him sometimes, and he sat playing with a little hair chain, twisting it round and round his fingers. It was mine. I wore it round my neck, supporting a gold locket which contained some of our dead parents' hair. Anna and I had each one alike. The clasp of mine had come unloosed, and it had fallen on the carpet. I did not replace it at once on my neck, and Horace took it up from the table

where I had laid it, and sat twisting it as I have said. He started when my uncle spoke, but leaned forward directly, and said, "O, I beg pardon. Pray do sing, Miss Anna."

"What shall I sing?" she asked, softly, lifting her head a little, but keeping her eyes cast down.

"There! You see you have succeeded, Horace," said my uncle. "I thought you would." But he looked surprised, and just a little hurt.

"Won't you sing what your uncle asked for?" demanded Horace.

"No. I'll sing the Yellow-haired laddie," answered Anna, decisively. She was just about to begin, when she glanced up at him, and stopped.

"Where did you get Margaret's chain? Put it down. I hate to see you twisting things backwards and forwards in your hands; it fidgets me to death."

Horace laid it down without a word, and there was a minute's silence. It was broken by Anna's clear vibrating tones, as she burst into an old legendary ballad, the name of which I have forgotten (it was not the Yellow-haired laddie), but which was wild, and fierce, and stormy, and which she sang with amazing power and passion. As the last note thrilled through the room, she rose and went away without a word of good night to any one, shutting the door sharply behind her. We were well used to her capricious moods, her sudden alternations of cloud and sunshine; but there was something strange and oppressive in this.

When our three guests bade us good night, intending to walk part of their way home in company, Miss Wokenham lingered behind with me, while De Beauguet and Horace were wrapping themselves to face the cold, in the hall. Aunt and uncle were both standing just outside the sitting-room door, and the maid had been sent to fetch Miss Wokenham's hood and mantle; so my old schoolmistress and I were alone together. She knelt up on a chair, and putting her two hands on my shoulders as I stood before her, looked earnestly into my face.

"I wonder," she said, slowly, "I wonder if my Philosophy is only a fair-weather sailor! I wonder whether her courage would rise into her head, or sink into her heels, if, all at once, in the midst of a prosperous voyage, favouring gales, halcyon seas, and the rest of it, she were to hear the warning cry, 'Breakers ahead!'" Then with a rapid change to her ordinary brisk manner, she added: "Why, what a sweet sage Margaret it is! You mustn't look so pale, my child. Good night! God bless you." And she was gone.

I hunted, before going to bed, for my hair chain. The locket was there, safe on the table, but I could not find the little guard that it used to hang upon. This vexed me rather, and Anna's unreasonable humour grieved me. I did not like her to be harshly judged by others, as I felt afraid she would be. I lay awake a

long time. But all the while, Miss Wokenham's words ran uneasily in my memory, like a haunting tune: "Breakers ahead! Breakers ahead!"

MR. WHELKS IN THE EAST.

A VISIT to some of the minor places of amusement at the east end of the great world of London, has proved to us that Mr. Whelks of distant Whitechapel is a more civilised being than Mr. Whelks who lives, under the shadow of the august towers of Parliament and the venerable abbey, in the New Cut, Lambeth. The surprising fact illustrates an old saying which we will put this way: The nearer to the Queen, Lords, and Commons, the Archbishop of Canterbury, and the Dean and Chapter—the further from all that is elevated, refined, well ordered, and Christian-like. Would it startle any one very much, if we were to express the opinion that Christian Mr. Whelks in Whitechapel derives a good deal of his superiority as a well-regulated citizen from his association with those benighted and "parlously" situated people, the Jews? Perhaps it would. Nevertheless, we make bold to express that opinion, and we hold by it very decidedly. In all they do, whether in the pursuit of business or in the pursuit of pleasure, the Jews are an earnest, methodical, aspiring people. If at times they live the life of the grub, it is that they may come forth presently as the butterfly. If they wallow in the gutter, it is not because they love the mud, but that they may dredge the gold out of it. There is an innate feeling of pride in the race, which inspires even the humblest rag-gatherer with a desire to reach a higher sphere. They are sober and self-denying, prudent and careful. But while in their long hours of labour they slave and drudge in the shabbiest garments, when the time for amusement comes they make themselves magnificent. Their ceremonial law teaches what we polite Christians call etiquette to the commonest man of the tribe. They are a people who wash their hands and anoint their heads, and pay respect to times and seasons and observances. The character of Jews has too long been wronged by Christian communities. We take old-clothes men and thieves—there being none such among Christians, of course—as the types of an ancient, refined, and charitable people.

The general aspect of the swarming population of Whitechapel is in a marked degree different from that of the New Cut. Their condition is about equal, but the Whitechapel mob is more active and business-like, more vivacious, and less disposed to yield to the force of unfavourable circumstances. There are signs of meanness in both places, but Whitechapel bears up with a better spirit than the New Cut. The current of life in the East, though a little muddy, runs briskly, and in so doing in a measure purifies itself; in Lambeth it stagnates, and grows fouler in consequence. Mr. Whelks of the New Cut, when his work is over, lounges in an

uncleaned condition with his back against a wall, listless, purposeless, and sodden. Mr. Whelks of Whitechapel smartens himself up so that you would scarcely know him, and, with a pin in his stock, and occasionally a ring on his finger, goes forth gaily to enjoy himself. It can scarcely be said that there is anything in the atmosphere of the East-end, or in any superior condition of the dwellings there, to account for this more wholesome spirit. We ascribe it mainly to the example and influence of the Jewish population. It is well known that the Jews are fond of gaiety and display, that they have a great taste for music and the entertainments of the theatre, and that they love to wear fine dresses and ornaments. What more natural than that a different people, with whom they work shoulder to shoulder, should take example by them and learn their ways? The moral influence of dress, even if it do not include a clean shirt, is wonderful. There is always hope for a poor man when he takes some pains to make himself smart after the labours of the day.

A remarkable instance of that stimulating influence which we ascribe to the example of the Jewish people is presented to all Whitechapel at the door of one of its temples of the drama. The place was formerly a saloon, or singing-room; it is now a theatre duly licensed by the Lord Chamberlain. It is attached to a large public-house, and may be approached through the bar. Entering, the other evening, and advancing to the pay-place, we found that receipt of custom occupied by the lessee and responsible proprietor. There he was, in a working-day suit of clothes, taking money and giving checks, and there he remained until the place was full. By-and-by, when Mr. Whelks came out to the bar for a whiff of air and a drop of drink, after the first stifling and dry piece, he saw behind the bar the money grub of the pay-box transformed into a butterfly of the gayest variety—a perfect Solomon, in all the glory of a white coat, a white hat, patent leather boots, an anchor-cable gold chain, and rings and studs blazing with diamonds. Solomon in all this glory is not above serving Mr. Whelks with a pint of porter, and saying a civil word to him as he tosses his twopence into the till. Mr. Whelks has a great respect for a man of this sort. Those fine clothes and brilliant gems, got as he knows by labour, fire him with emulation.

The prices of admission to this theatre are very low, ranging from a shilling down to threepence; but the threepenny people here were better dressed, tidier, and more orderly and attentive, than the sixpenny people in the New Cut. There was no whistling in the gallery, for the reason that there was no gallery in the usual sense of the word. Mr. Whelks and his family for their threepences had the best places in the house, in a large amphitheatre formed in that part of the building usually devoted to a beggarly account of empty dress and upper boxes. The rest was pit and stalls. There was not a single box in the place. This is the only theatre of the

class where we have found the stalls well filled. There were gloves in those stalls, elegant striped dresses, and dandy bonnets of the latest fashion worn by honest women. As to Mr. Whelks, he behaved remarkably well, except that he *would* smoke, contrary to strict prohibition.

In its internal construction this theatre is well adapted to its purpose, but it is sadly deficient in light, and the pieces presented on the stage, the acting and the scenery, are by no means calculated to inspire Mr. Whelks with cheerfulness. Here, as elsewhere, the Thespian cart jolts and sticks in the old wheel-worn deeply-sunk ruts. The bill, on the occasion of our visit, promised two dramas—Britomarte the Man-Hater, and Life As It Is, or the False Friend and the Felon Brother. Still harping on the old, jangling, discordant bass string! Why, oh why, will managers persist in thinking that Mr. Whelks, who every day of his life partakes of the sad and serious things of life, should always be anxious to finish with a supper of horrors? It is true that Mr. Whelks is fond of realities, but there are other realities than robbery and murder. Life is not all crime and violence, even to Mr. Whelks. He has, as we all know, a keen appreciation of humour (is he not, in his own way, a master of chaff and badinage?), he takes great delight in music (does he not catch up every new tune as it comes out?), and yet those who cater for his amusement persistently deny him any opportunity of gratifying those simple and natural tastes. He must be dosed with the extravagant horrors of a state of society altogether beyond nature and human ken. We are persuaded that Mr. Whelks is quite equal to the enjoyment of the highest class of entertainment that can be offered to him, provided it be natural. Only give him a chance of hearing Norma well acted and well sung, and see with what rapt attention he will listen, and how gaily he will tumble down the gallery stairs humming the tunes. Show him the School for Scandal, and note how keenly he will appreciate the scandal scenes; how he will warm towards Charles Surface when he refuses to sell his uncle's picture; with what virtuously indignant glee he will anticipate the downfall of the screen and the exposure of the hypocritical Joseph!

Judging from the opening scene that Britomarte the Man Hater was likely to hold the mirror up to life as it is not, we decided to spend an hour elsewhere, and return in time to see the reflexion of Life As It Is. We adjourned to a penny gaff in the immediate neighbourhood. On our way, we had some talk with an officer of police with regard to this establishment. Were plays performed in it? Yes; last night they had played Dick Turpin. Was it licensed by the Lord Chamberlain? No. By the magistrates? No. Was it under the supervision of the police? No. How was that? The police never attended a place of entertainment unless they were paid by the proprietor. Then, the police don't look after the

gaffs? No. Who did look after them? Nobody.

The Whitechapel gaff—we believe it is the only one in the locality—is attached to a ginger-beer shop. The sole lessee and proprietor has knocked a hole through the wall of the shop to establish communication for money-taking purposes, with the narrow passage leading to the gaff. Here, in *medias res*, the sole lessee and proprietor, a rather magnificent personage in a white coat (the badge of Whitechapel nobility), sits on a stool, with one hand in the shop dispensing ginger beer, and the other thrust through the hole, taking admission money in the passage leading to the theatre. We paid twopenny into the theatrical hand, and were bidden to ascend to the reserved seats. The reserved seats were half a dozen dirty forms in a cockloft at the end of a narrow shed. We were the first arrival in that part of the house, and, when the gentleman who played the violin emerged from beneath the stage into the orchestra and saw us, he was staggered by our appearance, and exclaimed, "Oh scissors!" He then had a long conversation with the Harp about us, and it was evidently their joint opinion that we were a suspicious character. There was not much to look at while waiting for the performance to commence. Decorative art did not extend beyond the proscenium of the little stage at the end of the shed. The walls were covered by an old and dingy paper, torn and blurred with wear and weather. On the left wall were pinned several announcements roughly written upon scraps of coarse paper. Thus: "Ginger Beer, 1d. Try our Penny Smokes;" and this important announcement:

To be sung for
NEXT THURSDAY,

A LARGE CHEST OF DRAWERS.

Take your tickets.

We had heard of singing for supper, but never before of singing for a chest of drawers. We were informed that it would be a grand competition by artists from the principal gaffs, whose respective merits would be weighed in the Philosopher's scales by a jury of the audience—the best singer to carry off the chest of drawers. Two young gentlemen in the pit were canvassing the merits of certain intending competitors, and it was the decided opinion of one of them that his favourite could sing all the others' heads off. We regretted that we had not come on Thursday to see the heads fall, in the cause of the chest of drawers.

The area of the theatre seemed to be divided into pit and stalls; for though the forms were uniformly black and dirty, through coming in contact with the evening costume of their occupants, a select half dozen of the seats were railed off from the others by a low partition. The audience here was chiefly composed of young boys, who beguiled the time until the rising of the curtain by smoking short pipes, drinking ginger beer, and chasing each other over the seats. The audience and the stage authorities

were on the most intimate and familiar terms. When it was time to light the gas, the stage manager popped his head out from underneath the stage, and said, "Who's got a lucifer?" Two or three lads in the pit immediately vaulted over the partition of the stalls, and, striking matches, lighted up the six gas-jets which constituted the whole illuminating apparatus of the house. Before the performance commenced, the top of a battered old grand piano in the orchestra was loaded with bottles of ginger beer for the consumption of the evening. When a gentleman in the pit required refreshment, a bottle of ginger beer was thrown to him over the heads of the stalls; when, later in the evening, the stock on the piano required replenishing, a fresh supply was tossed over the heads of the pit into the orchestra, where the bottles were deftly caught in bundle-of-firewood fashion by the master of the revels. Neither corkscrews nor glasses were used in getting at the contents of the bottles. The plan that prevailed in boxes, stalls, and pit, alike, was to knock the end of the bottle smartly on the seat, and, when the cork flew out (which it invariably did in obedience to a law of science connected with gas, doubtless known to the professors of the Polytechnic Institution), to apply the gushing stone fountain to the mouth. The audience were extremely friendly towards each other. No one thought of selfishly consuming a whole bottle, but on taking a pull handed it to his next neighbour, politely asking him "to have a suck." The amount of enjoyment which these Whitechapel boys managed to extract from a single penny bottle of ginger beer, was wonderful; for, when six boys had refreshed themselves with the beer, the same six boys amused themselves for some time afterwards in tossing the bottle from one to another. Short pipes were passed from mouth to mouth, like the bottles, and one pipe in particular was in great request, owing to its having a flexible mouth-piece. The possessor of this pipe was much envied. Great attention was paid to a distinguished public character, who was recognised in the pit. Every one within reach offered him a suck of his bottle and a "draw" at his pipe, and, in return for these civilities, the distinguished public character took off a decoration which he wore and handed it round for inspection. It was not the order of the Bath; rather, we think, the order of the Fleece; for it was formed of a square piece of cardboard, and bore this inscription:

I AM PARRILLIZED.

This badge of distinction was inspected with admiration, and the owner, when it was handed back to him, proudly affixed it to his breast.

The performers as they arrived passed through the theatre to their dressing-rooms. They were five in number, three gentlemen and two ladies, and their stage costume was contained in two bundles and one carpet-bag. The prima donna, in tripping along, coquettishly slapped a youthful member of the audience on the back, and called him "Joe;" and the leading man seemed

to be on familiar terms with all of them. The first part of the performance consisted of singing and dancing, and an exhibition of ventriloquism by a young man who had adapted, with considerable success, the ventriloquial entertainment of Colonel Stodare. Master Whelks, for the small charge of one penny, was treated to the gentleman on the roof, the gentleman in the cellar, and the stolid person under the chair who won't be quiet; and Master Whelks was greatly delighted, as he was bound to be. The songs were decent enough; but they were mostly about the troubles of courtship and marriage: a theme that rather anticipated Master Whelks's experience. In a stage Irishman, who came on with a caved-in hat and a short stick to sing and dance, we recognised the gentleman who had achieved the wallowing-about performance for "fadges" in the New Cut. He was not so coarse and brutal here. He felt that he was before a superior audience. His habit of soliciting the encouragement of "fadges" led him, in the middle of his performance, to point to a spot on the scene, as being a good mark to aim at, but a derisive laugh from Master Whelks reminded him that he was in Whitechapel, not in the New Cut.

The dancing was worse than the singing, but both were bad enough. The boys themselves could have sung and danced just as well, at random. Thus it is, nearly always, at places of entertainment instituted for Mr. Whelks. There are a pay-place, a house, seats, lights, a stage, and persons to tread it; but what should be the purpose of all this, an artistic and pleasant entertainment, is utterly wanting. The performances at this unlicensed gaff concluded with a stage-play "comprising the whole strength of the company." It was a condensed version of the Golden Farmer; the chief elements of interest being robbery and murder. Master Whelks, however, seemed to be most entertained by the comic underplot, carried on by a rascally servant and a waiting-maid, whose costume at home and abroad was that of the ballet. The comic man was hungry. Strange to say, hunger is always comic in hungry neighbourhoods. It doesn't go for much, in the way of a joke, where the audience comes in from a six o'clock dinner of six courses. There was a great roar when the comic man said that he hadn't had anything to eat for three weeks but a penn'orth of peas-pudd'n and a fagot. The fact that the Golden Farmer can be played anywhere at this time of day is a sufficient proof of the utter stagnation of theatrical affairs. Why on earth should this absurd story be handed down through generations? Simply because in theatrical affairs there is little or no enterprise. A piece once written and acted, be it never so bad, is a piece for all time. Literature of this class in books, has long gone out; but it still remains on the stage. If Mr. Mudie acted on the theatrical principle, he would send us the Farmer of Inglewood Forest when we ask for Felix Holt, the Radical.

When we returned to the theatre the act-drop had fallen upon the first act of *Life As It Is*. The last two acts, however, were quite

sufficient to prove that the title was a misnomer. There were two heroes, George Travis and Charles Travis, twin-brothers, personated by one and the same actor; there was a heroine May Bates, "the victim of Fate." There were Chaffer, "a swell, a cheap John, and a felon;" Bob Oates, "a child of Nature, but not so green as he looks;" Patty Roselips, "a young girl from the country, rosy and rollicking," &c. George Travis is a well-to-do young man in love with May Bates, the victim, and Charles, his brother, is a seedy, dissolute fellow, on the verge of crime. The great effect created by the actor was in going off one minute as the smart George, and coming back next minute as the seedy Charles. This so puzzles the comic man, that he says Charles must be the devil or Doctor Foster, and as for their mother, she "doesn't know t'other from which." The difficulties that stand in the way of the marriage of George with May Bates, are not very clearly set forth, but they have something to do with a stony old father, who softens subsequently without sufficient cause. The difficulty in the way of the marriage of Bob Oates, the child of Nature, with the rollicking Patty Roselips, there can be no mistake about, as it is explicitly stated by Bob Oates on several occasions, that he can't get married until he has money enough to buy a four-post bedstead. Charles Travis steps over the verge of crime in an attempt to rob May Bates's father, and is wounded by a pistol-shot fired by his companion, the swell, the cheap John, and the felon. He seeks shelter with his mother, who has not seen him for years, and she, with the aid of George, ships Charles off to Australia. At the conclusion of the act, half a scene is drawn off to show a nondescript-looking vessel hopping off to Australia with the unhappy Charles. In the third act, Mr. Whelks is not a little astonished to find all the personages of the drama in Australia, including Bob Oates; who, as he is married to Patty the rollicking, and is blest with a son, seems to have made up the money and got over the bedstead difficulty. The comic man (his invariable destiny) keeps an inn. Thither comes the swellish but felonious Chaffer, who has found a large nugget of gold at the diggings. When Bob refuses him another bottle, he presents two loaded pistols at Bob's head. On the second bottle Chaffer gets drunk in half a minute—the progress of intoxication on the stage is wonderfully rapid—and wants to kiss Bob's wife, forgetting his pistols on the table. It is now Bob's turn to present the two pistols at Chaffer, who is baffled, and shrinks off without his nugget, which the virtuous Bob—now turning out not to be so green as he looks—quietly pockets. May now appears at the antipodes in the identical straw hat which she wore in England years before. She is in search of George. She meets Charles quite promiscuously on the great continent, and mistakes him for his brother. Finding that he is married, she is likely to die of a broken heart, when another mode of ending her existence is offered to her. Chaffer comes on, and for no conceiv-

able reason, except to bring the piece to a close, begins to struggle with May. When he has struggled sufficiently all over the stage, he drags May up a platform covered with white-brown canvas—no attempt has been made to paint it—to represent rocks, and throws her among some revolving towels, representing water. He has no sooner done so than he is attacked by George, who throws him after May among the towels. Then George springs in among the towels himself, and brings May to the shore not in the least wet, she having probably dried herself with the towels; and then, when Chaffer, bobbing up his head, is shot by Bob Oates, George and May join hands and declare their happiness to be complete. The scenery was an affront even to Mr. Wheelks. Mr. Wheelks in the East deserves better things of those who, in catering for his amusement, thrive upon him remarkably well.

FORCE AND MATTER.

EVERYTHING which we behold around us may be classed into two grand categories; namely, agents, and things which are acted on by those agents. Wherever we look or turn we behold or we feel **MATTER**; which would be a dead inert unchanging substance, were it not set in motion, transformed, and vivified, by the never-ceasing influences of **FORCE**. It is Almighty Force, combined with Wisdom and Benevolence, which has moulded the universe into its present state of beauty and regularity. It is the force of chemical affinity which causes the iron to rust, and the leaf to rot, and the rock to crumble into fertile soils. It is the vibrating force of radiation which causes the sun to illumine and the fire to warm us. But for the force of gravitation, the apple, detached from its parent bough, would still hang where it was, suspended in mid-air, waiting for a hand to stretch forward and take it.

The existing state of things is therefore entirely brought about by the combination of agents and of objects acted on. The hand which holds this pen is merely matter directed by a guiding mental force. However marvellously that matter may be organised, however wonderful and mysterious may be the origin and derivation of that force, one thing is certain—that in every act and motion we have force impressing and influencing matter. We have the worker and the material; the operator and the subject; the master proceeding according to law, and the passive unresisting slave. All which constitute the majors and the minors both of the visible and the invisible worlds. Force, and its modifications, is the mighty problem which occupies the profoundest intellects of the day.

Travel in imagination to the vast and magnificent region of South America called Brazil. Penetrate the thick forests with which its soil is densely covered, and you will fall upon groups of numerous slaves busily excavating the earth, breaking fragments off the rocks, and agitating the morsels in bowls of water. From time to

time, a small pebble, apparently worthless, is carefully picked out and put aside. Hunting for this pebble, and nothing else, is the constant employment of the workmen—for the pebble is no less than the diamond, which acquires its value and brilliancy solely through the labours of the lapidary. He cuts all its facets one by one, and so brings out the luminous treasures which the rough stone held concealed.

The diamond is the image both of the human mind, and of the subjects on which it brings itself to bear. Continued efforts elicit light. And, as the diamond is capable of being polished and perfected only through the instrumentality of its own proper dust, so are learning and science the results of the friction and contact of many minds, each labouring to help the other to attain greater clearness, translucency, and faultlessness. This premised, we are reminded that we may call the substance of bodies *matter*, while *force* comprises the diverse causes which produce, in bodies, diverse manifestations, and are incessantly modifying their conditions and their properties.

Matter, then, is the substance of bodies—that part of bodies which manifests itself to our senses. By studying it, we discover that it is made up of little bits, of excessive minuteness, which are called molecules, or atoms. Bodies, therefore, consist of more or less considerable agglomerations of material atoms; which atoms are grouped together without actually touching each other, leaving between them intervals or interstices, called by philosophers “pores.” Would you have this constitution of matter acquire in your eyes the full truth of evidence? You have only to increase, in thought, those intervals indefinitely, at the same time transforming the molecules into so many worlds. You have then before you a planetary system; each molecule has become a planet, each interstice measures millions of leagues in length and breadth. But the whole system, in its integrity, is nothing but a sort of enormous body whose different portions form one whole. There is the same relation between the exiguity of the ultimate particles of matter and the interstices which separate them, as there is between the planets and the interplanetary spaces. A group of molecules, and portion of a body, may be regarded as a world. Exactly as the heavenly bodies revolve in their orbits round each other, without ceasing to keep together, so do the molecules of matter oscillate around their respective positions, without staying beyond certain limits. It is liberty restrained by law.

Professor Tyndall, in like manner, tells us that imagination must help us to understand the constitution of solid bodies; because the motion of their molecules, communicated by heat, however intense it may be, is executed within limits too minute, and the moving particles are too small, to be visible. In the case of solid bodies, while the force of cohesion still holds them together, we must conceive a power of vibration, within certain limits, to be possessed by the molecules. We must suppose them oscillating to and fro; and the greater the

amount of heat we impart to the body, the more rapid will be the molecular vibration, and the wider the amplitude of the atomic oscillations. It is the vibration of the molecules of a solid which cause its expansion when heat is applied to it. If the molecules, as is believed, revolve round each other, the communication of heat, by augmenting their centrifugal force, may be supposed to push them more widely asunder; exactly as a weight attached to a spiral spring, if twirled in the air, tends to fly away from the hand which holds it; and, as the speed of revolution is augmented, the spring stretches more and more, and the distance between the hand and the weight is increased.

When bodies are made to give forth any sound, when the fiddle-string trembles beneath the bow, when the bell vibrates at the stroke of its clapper, their atoms move in cadence, like the world in space. Between the imperceptible molecules which move within limits of infinite smallness, and the planetary globes which roll in the firmament, there is no difference. The harmony of the spheres is not an empty word. A cause keeps the molecules of a body together; the same cause prevents the heavenly bodies from parting company. That cause is a force, and it is the same force, in both cases; whether it be called cohesion when it assembles atoms, or gravitation when it groups stars in clusters.

Looking closer into the organisation of matter, we shall find that force not only forms irregular aggregations of molecules, but it works with order and symmetry. Witness the phenomena of crystallisation, to appreciate which, we need go no further than the freezing of water and the formation of snow. Professor Tyndall deftly and delicately dissects a block of ice, by means of a beam from his electric lamp: pulling the crystal edifice to pieces by accurately reversing the order of its architecture. Silently and symmetrically the crystallising force had built the atoms up; silently and symmetrically does the electric beam take them down. Here we have a star, and there a star; and as the action continues, the ice appears to resolve itself into stars, each one possessing six rays, each one resembling a beautiful six-petalled flower. By shifting the lens to and fro, new star-flowers are brought into view; and as the action continues, the edges of the petals become serrated, spreading themselves out like fern-leaves. Probably few are aware of the beauty latent in a block of common ice. Only think, continues our eloquent countryman, of lavish Nature operating thus throughout the world! Every atom of the solid ice which sheets the frozen lakes of the north has been fixed according to this law. Nature "lays her beams in music;" and it is the function of science to purify our organs, so as to enable us to hear the strain. To many persons, a block of ice may seem of no more interest and beauty than a block of glass; but, in reality, it bears the same relation to glass that an oratorio of Handel does to the cries in a market-place. The ice is music, the glass is noise; the ice is order, the glass is confusion. In the glass, molecular forces consti-

tute an inextricably entangled skein; in the ice, they are woven into a symmetric web, of the wonderful texture just described.

Snow-flakes are not less curious nor less complicated in their structure. When the cold is sharp enough to cause water to congeal, each tiny droplet that hangs in the air gives birth to a slim six-sided column terminated at each end by a six-faced pyramid. These little crystals do not remain isolated. During their descent they cluster together, so forming star-shaped groups. Sometimes six crystals only assemble round a common centre—the simplest possible form of star; but, in the majority of cases, the crystalline associations are more numerous. On the branches of the primary star, smaller crystals are regularly disposed, and on these latter smaller branchlets still. Thus the snowy star grows more and more complicated, while every additional ramification is made in obedience to the one same law.

Our great English lecturer also tells us that snow, perfectly formed, is not an irregular aggregate of ice particles. In a calm atmosphere, the aqueous atoms arrange themselves, so as to form the most exquisite figures. The snow crystals are built upon the same type as the six-petalled flowers which show themselves within a block of ice, when a beam of heat is sent through it. The molecules arrange themselves to form hexagonal stars. From a central nucleus shoot six spiculæ, every two of which are separated by an angle of sixty degrees. From these central ribs, smaller spiculæ shoot right and left with unerring fidelity, to the angle of sixty degrees, and from these again other smaller ones diverge at the same angle. These frozen six-leaved blossoms constitute our mountain snows. They load the Alpine heights, where their frail architecture is soon destroyed by the accidents of weather. Every winter they fall, and every summer they disappear. While they last, they assume the most wonderful variety of form; their tracery is of the finest frozen gauze; and, round about their corners, other rosettes of smaller dimensions often cling. Beauty is superposed upon beauty; as if Nature, once committed to her task, took delight in showing, even within the narrowest limits, the wealth of her resources.

To behold this force in action, you have only to watch the process of crystallisation under the microscope—a most astounding spectacle especially when seen with polarised light. Although the atoms themselves are imperceptible, you witness the rapid growth of their aggregation. Invisible soldiers form into visible battalions, arranging themselves regularly, as at the word of command. The same troops, that is the same solutions, never perform by mistake the evolutions proper to others. Alum presents itself in a mass with eight equal triangular faces; sea-salt furnishes cubes; the prisms of rock crystal are equally recognisable. Minerals have a physiognomy, which reveals the constitution of their bodies. Chemistry tells us that bodies which are similar in form are fundamentally similar; that is, if they affect the same crystal-

line form, they offer a like mode of composition.

Do not these facts betray the action of a force which directs the atoms and subjects them to its law? a sort of primordial, elementary force, animating all matter, sometimes causing a simple aggregation of the molecules, sometimes arranging them in determinate order, according to the conditions in which they happen to be placed. This force, M. Hénant informs us, is called "*la force physico-chimique*;" which does not in the least help us to understand what it is, or whence derived. All we can say is, that it must originate with the Great Artificer of all things.

Advancing with his subject, our author passes on to organic matter, where he finds himself in the presence of new phenomena. Here he confidently rushes on, where abler men, without exactly fearing to tread, proceed with very cautious footsteps. Perhaps the temerity may be more apparent than real. Organic matter, he allows, is identically the same as inorganic. It is the same matter which in turn makes a part of minerals, vegetables, and animals; the same which forms the soil, the leaves, the fruits, the arteries, and the brain—thus circulating through a hundred different organisations. This agrees with the teaching, that the matter of our bodies is exactly that of inorganic nature, and that there is no substance in the animal tissues which is not primarily derived from the rocks, the water, and the air.

But then comes the question of Vital Force. We know that there *is* a vital force. Consider a tree, and remember that it sprung from a seed; that from that seed there simultaneously issued, both a root, which of its own accord tended downward, and a stem, which sprouted upward; and then, that this root, by the nature of its tissue, is essentially fitted to imbibe the moisture of the earth, while the leaves are equally suited to act as lungs, which is the part assigned to them in the vegetable. You mark the appropriation of the tissue to its object, of the texture of the organ to its function.

Observe now the form of the tree, and you will be struck with its persistence. While the tree is being developed, its form remains constant at every period of its life. During the whole of its existence, sometimes very long—and, what is more, during a progressive increase—the form of the tree is faithfully preserved. No change takes place in the shape of its branches, its leaves, its flowers, or its fruits. An ash never disguises itself as an elm; an olive never assumes the costume of an orange-tree. Do men gather grapes off thorns, or figs off thistles? An oak-leaf is always the leaf of an oak, so long as that oak continues to live. It constantly displays an oak-leaf's colour, shape, nature, and dimensions. Whether the tree be young or old, and even if the matter of which it is constituted have been repeatedly renewed, its form suffers no modification.

The limit of stature is no less remarkable than the persistence of form. Take the poplar and the reed, though of quite different build; neither exceeds a certain height. Look at a field of

wheat; the level of the surface is scarcely broken by any inequality in the length of the stems. Finally, the duration of vegetable life, the limit of its extension in time, is not less determinate than the limit of its extension in space. There are annual, biennial, and perennial plants; perennials even seem to have each their own special span of life. Some exist for tens, others for hundreds, others for thousands of years.

Nevertheless, let chemists analyse the diverse specimens of vegetable organisation, and they will discover the same material elements, namely, those which constitute the world of minerals. The two kingdoms are constantly interchanging the same materials; the same oxygen, the same hydrogen, the same carbon, alternate, make part of minerals and vegetables. It is the same matter, so to speak, which is run into different moulds, clothes itself in divers colours, offers various outlines and dimensions. "Molecular forces determine the *form* which the vital energy will assume. In one case, this energy is so conditioned by its atomic machinery, as to result in the formation of a cabbage; in another case, it is so conditioned as to result in the formation of an oak." But the very same carbon may have entered into the chalk, into a fagot, into a flower, or into a fruit.

Like phenomena are more marked and evident in the organisation of animals. The persistence of form is more distinctly traced, the mutations of matter are more completely apparent, the phases of life more strongly characterised. Experiments made by mixing madder with an animal's food, prove that even in solid bone there is continual change of its constituent matter during the formation, the development, and the life of bones. The same takes place in every part of an animal's body. Veins, arteries, muscles, nerves, are incessantly undergoing renovation. All those organs offer the spectacle of a continual change of the matter which constitutes their substance. An accident to the skin, after a certain time, disappears through this reparative process. During youth, its action is more energetic, and its phenomena are more apparent than in old age. Nevertheless, bones ever remain bones, and arteries continue arteries. In spite of the continual change of the elements which compose an animal's body, the form of its different organs is not altered. Slight modifications may occur; but in the animal, as in the vegetable, we observe a permanence of form. The characteristic structure remains intact.

The animal grows for a certain time, after which its development is arrested. Every living being has its appointed stature, which varies only within restricted limits. It is subject to a limit of size, like that observed in the vegetable. Finally, the animal lives. It first grows, and then ceases to grow, without, however, ceasing to live. The duration of its existence is intimately connected with the duration of its development; the longer its growth has lasted, the longer will its adult life last. Nature destroys her own handiwork at a rate of slowness corresponding to that which she employed in

building it up. We again find the limit of vital duration for the animal as for the vegetable.

Notwithstanding all which, it is not a special kind of matter, but that which has already formed part of minerals, which traverses thus the frames of organised beings: drawn along, as Cuvier expresses it, in a continual vortex or current. This continual current flows in one direction, which, however complicated it may be, remains constant. While these movements of matter are being performed, while the current continues, it is evident that a force is in action. While new materials are being adapted to the body, while worn-out materials are being rejected, a force directs and regulates the incessant change. Matter plays the part of an obedient slave. Each atom is the recipient of the force, until a fresh atom comes to take its place. The permanence of the force, its unity of action, is manifested in the midst of an unceasing vortex. Matter is transient, and passes away; force remains, and is permanent.

This is the grand point to establish. Names are of very inferior consequence. M. Hénant, in his lectures on Force and Matter, calls *this* force Vital Force, holding that it is impossible to confound it with Physico-Chemical Force. The metaphysical gauntlet here thrown down, is hardly worth the picking up. At least as good an authority as M. Hénant asks, "Are the forces of organic matter different in kind from those of inorganic?" and answers, "All the philosophy of the present day tends to negative the question; and to show that it is the directing and compounding, in the organic world, of forces belonging equally to the inorganic, that constitutes the mystery and the miracle of vitality."

In meddling with Spiritual, Intellectual, or Mental force, M. Hénant takes us out of our depth, and out of his own. He is right in owning that "when we endeavour to pass from the region of physics to the region of thought, we meet a problem to seize on which transcends any conceivable expansion of the powers we now possess. We may think over the subject again and again, but it eludes all intellectual presentation. Thus, though the territory of science is wide, it has its limits, from which we look with vacant gaze into the region beyond."

SOME OLD SUNDAYS.

POETS have done very handsomely for Sunday; but all their "peaceful Sabbaths," "village chimes," and days of rest, deal with the country Sunday, or, to narrow it still more, with the village Sunday. The village Sunday, take it where we will, has the true Sabbath poetry and flavour: the old church-tower, the general festive air, the ancient chime, musical and soft, sweetened by age like old Lafitte: not raw, and sharp, and strong. A new bell, like new claret, is odious. The villagers, "virtuous" by courtesy on that day at least, have the look of stage peasants, and

the children and the women crowding to the church in their rustic finery, give a pleasant and innocent air. But in the pure country, and the country-houses, Sunday in its profaner aspect is a terribly dull day. There are the drive for the religious duties, and the service, and the sermon, and the coming home, and the criticism on the sermon, and the lunch. After that refection, despondency and ennui set in; and if the host—and there are such hosts—be of an "improving" turn of mind (of course only as regards his neighbour), and would wish to sanctify the day in a sort of extra professional manner, there is much trial in store for the guests. There is the procession to the library, the composing of features to a decently funereal air, the breaking out of irreverence on the part of juniors during the procession, the enforced attendance of retainers, some of whom are always missing, and sheltered by confederates, and the soft gliding into the library and securing of easy-chairs; while the host in the middle—afar off at his desk—is almost for the moment transported into the belief that he is a real clergyman, and reads, at great length, in the most impressive manner. These Sundays, at devout country-houses, are gloomy to experience, gloomier to remember, and make the rising of the Monday morning's sun, when the shooting and the riding set in again, doubly welcome.

Yet gloomier still is our English Sunday in town. The whole resolves itself into the monotony of rows of shutters. Even the well-meant festive air of Sunday clothes, the almost whitewashed look of the excellent heads of families who have been labouring all the week in the heats and the dusts, and who seem to have got all hands to work to polish and "point" their surfaces, and who carry their prayer-books with a triumph and complacency (why is there more finery about prayer-books, and why are they more gorgeously gilt than other books—say spelling-books?)—even this part of the pageant adds only to the despondency. A tour of the London city churches and churchlings, as once described in this journal from an "uncommercial" point of view, would be the surest inducement to confirmed melancholy that could be discovered. There is surely some amendment wanted in our fashion of keeping Sunday. Let there be "rest" by all means, and let there be "holiness" by yet more means; but let there not be the weary unrest of utter idleness, or the starch and scraping buckram of official puritanism.

Through that gauzy curtain which hangs between us and our childish days, and which gives to them the misty charm that the same material does to tableaux vivans, I can look back and make out a Sunday or two more distinct than other Sundays set me to behold.

There has been a voyage of some three or four days and nights in a lumbering steamer of the older build—of the pre-Scott-Russell era—during which, discomfort and physical agonies of all sorts have been my childish portion; for there has been rough weather, and

the ancient craft has been heaving up and down; and the boyish mind which relished this motion a good deal on deck, as more or less partaking of "fun," hears the bell for dinner, and rushes down to enjoy the luxuries of that meal, set out at the public cost, all of which may be partaken of unhecked by maternal restraint—maternal restraint at that moment being miserable in the ladies' cabin with every other lady. The swinging of the soup-tureen was yet more fun, but not the sudden sting that seemed to shoot through the boyish frame—that sharp megrim in the head, precursor of ignominious rout, of the wild rush for the door, the temporary relief in the fresh air, and the final striking down and more sustained agonies that went on day and night on the little shelf that was called berth, until a steward was heard betimes saying that "we were coming in," and that it was Sunday morning. There was a soft gliding motion in the old craft that told of smooth waters; there was the pattering of heels and flopping of ropes sounding overhead; presently a stoppage, then a going on, and at last wearily, and with a head that seemed as if it were a churn, with a dozen dairymaids churning hard and fast—the boy, that is now a man, crawled up the brass-bound stair, and saw that "we were in."

Sunday morning, indeed—sunny, bright, blue, glittering; no longer the weary sea all round, with its heart-sickening monotony, but a great port crowded with shipping, threads and shrouds on all sides, gay snowy white and yellow houses rising all round, busy yellow quays, crowded yellow quays, quays mixed up with a blue sea, blue sea mixed up with quays, and on the quays men all in cheerful blue cobalt frocks and scarlet nightcaps, and women with coloured petticoats and no bonnets, but in caps, and with a great deal of gold, and rather copper-coloured. It was bewildering, and, with dairymaids still churning hard, I note, with a boy's special curiosity and even interest, *in spite* of the churn, that there is a huge wheel turning on the quay, which is somehow lifting a great block of stone, and, what is more wonderful, it is turned treadmill-fashion by more men in easy blue frocks, crawling on the wheel, which at that moment appeared to me to be a most delightful mechanical operation. At this moment I have the whole of this scene, like a picture before me, and recal my placid wonder at this being Sunday morning, and such operations going on, when, in spite of the dashing of the churn, I hear some one say again that this is France, and that this gay Sunday morning scene is Havre. Then we go ashore, and look back at the heavy lumbering monster which has brought us, without pleasure or regret leave the port behind, and get down a narrow street where there are no pathways. And above this is a house that seems all mirrors, and golden clocks, and white shining doors, and gorgeous crimson-velvet chairs and sofas, on which we lie down and ease the churning head, and get

much better in reply to the affectionate question: "How do you feel now, dear?" when breakfast sets in, with a long loaf of mysterious and wonderful bread made into a gymnastic club.

This is Sunday morning in the French town. Much restored by the meal, we go out. We come to a huge yellow cathedral, all yellow aisles and altars, and innumerable long candles, and wicker chairs enough to furnish fifty houses. And all this crowded to the door; and most wonderful of all, here are a corps of soldiers clattering into the aisle, making their guns rattle on the pavement, and, wonder of wonders, their band striking up with rich effect the popular Sonnambula air, "Vi ravviso." This was accepted with present delight, and without questioning.

Connected with that jacket (or perhaps frock era—for more correctly speaking the transition took place then) are some more Sunday mornings. I see as distinctly now, as I do the house opposite, the villa on the pleasant hill that overlooked the town, and which was the true French villa, with the green blinds, and grapes growing over it, and a garden behind, delightful of summer days. The scent of that garden comes in through the window at this moment. And in front was the great green, where there used to be terrible and sanguinary combats between English gentlemen boys and French lads in blouses (the French boys always driving at their hereditary foes' stomach with their heads, and the English boys putting those heads into chancery); and where more kites were flown in a week than in any English county in a year. A scene, in which a benevolent but dirty French master, who always said of sultry days without restraint, "O madame! comme je sue! comme je sue!" took secret delight, and on a disengaged evening would come and construct scientifically a gigantic kite six feet in length, with a tail in proportion. On a triumphant Sunday evening it made its first successful ascent, and rose to an enormous height above the level of the sea; it was a no less disastrous evening, though not a Sunday evening, when it suddenly broke away, and was believed to have fallen into the sea some miles off. It was never heard of again, but its loss was looked on as a public calamity; for, sinking national differences, the French boys stood and looked on in crowds whenever the time of an ascent came round. I never was so much affected as by that blow, and through the night literally roared with grief.

Across the fields, a little path led, for about a mile, to a village called Sanvic, I think, in which parish we were included. It was no more than a village, but it had its church, which aimed, as French churches do, at being cathedral-like. With Sanvic are some Sundays associated—festival Sundays, during the month of May—with great wealth of white roses, and young girls, and candles, and processions. There was a curé, a good and simple man, handsome and Italian-looking, and glistening

in that black picturesque dress of the French clergy, and who tried to learn English (but never succeeded), and who delighted in these little processions.

There was a magnificence about these pageants which never palled, and the honest rustics of the neighbourhood were never tired of doing them honour, and of putting on their best finery to that end. The stout man who blew with a will into what then seemed a black boa-constrictor that wound itself about his surplice, but what I now know to be a musical instrument called a faux-bourdon, always excited my alarm and yet interest—pleasure and terror. But pleasure unmixt was always associated with a great cake borne in the procession on a man's head—a cake, too, that was later cut up in the church, and distributed in what seemed to me discreditably shabby portions. These were charming little festivals; there was an air of innocence over them as they wound through the street and the dresses glittered, and the young girls in veils and flowers looked down on the ground, and the faux-bourdon brayed, and even the cake on the man's head looked not in the least glorified, as though knowing that in the fulness of time its merits would be acknowledged, and needed no adventitious aids. A short time ago at some profaner rout, at which I found myself with a heart more rusted than it was in those days, was offered to me a cake, the very sight of which sent me searching back through all the thick mists, and fogs, and jungles of life to those bygone and innocent times. And while the fiddlers were at their work hard by, and the cornet was winding out a Valse de Desir, and the lovely Lydia had just swept past me, there was I abstractedly searching the mermaid caves of memory with this cake as a talisman; at last led me back to the little hill, the Côte, over the French town, and from the hill to the Sunday procession, and the great cake on the man's head. In honour of those old days, how many years ago? and perhaps to the astonishment of the polite gentlemen who waited behind me, I went and cut myself a huge *tranche* in memoriam.

I have other Sundays to think of. A Sunday, as it were yesterday, at one of the gambling towns; where the old church, which has four old Belgian round-about spires—one at each corner, of the piano-leg style of architecture—lies over against the rooms, the house of play and the house of God being close together. It was a very old edifice, with pale hock-coloured windows that eddied and rippled. And here, on this Sunday, there was a ceremony and a sermon by a preacher of distinction, who came from Antwerp, which, taken together, rather protracted the rites, until it was actually time for *Le Jeu* to begin over the way. And the weather being hot, the old organ pealed on, and came rolling in at the open windows of the gambling-house, and the hymn mixed with the cries of "Messieurs, faites le jeu!" and "Le couleur gagne." The players did not quite relish it. It seemed like the cathedral scene in Faust,

where the demon's cries mix with the organ. And it seemed to me that the director thought the coincidence awkward, and had the windows put down. His theory was that his profession should be in harmony, in all respects, with the march of the age, even with the religious instincts of the day. Naturally he was annoyed.

Coming home again to fatherland, I look out through the fog for another Sunday, and find myself in a steamer coming up the great dark highway of a great river, about four in the morning; which watery road is made much more like a highway from its being dotted on both sides with long lines of lights that twinkle like stars. We have had a rough night, and signs of land are welcome. So, too, getting further on, is the tall tower with the blazing clock-face which seems to hang in the air. The waters look dark and Stygian, the air is stiff and sharp, and with a suspicion of sleet. And presently, wheeling sharply to the right, we make for a dock where there are heavy red piers massive as rocks and gates to a giant's castle, and where there are flaring lamps and shadowy men that seem to drip through the fog. Then we are put ashore, and grope darkly among sheds, and huge casks, and monster carts half loaded or half unloaded; but all dark and not discernible till one is on them. For this is a Sunday morning, and the genii that load and unload are gone and have left their work half done. Drawbridges that rumble hollowly, chains that clank, patches of Styx again glistening below, and here are the great gate and the open road and the street.

What the hour was by this time, I did not know. It was strictly no concern of mine, as I was going on by one of the many trains that doubtless left every day, this being a great commercial place. But down at the dock gates, or near the dock gates, there were no cabs: which was strange, considering what a great commercial city this was. Howbeit, a strong porter went on before, and led the way past grim streets and tall chocolate coloured warehouses, and smoking chimneys, and great funeral yards that seemed filled with coal, and long viaducts of smutty-looking arches. But all this was quiet. By-and-by we got to the railway—the London and Grand Diagonal. And now for breakfast at a good hotel—was there not one called the Grecian?—ham, eggs, and "devils" generally—a repast that seems always to harmonise with the human system on coming out of a packet. Here was certainly the London and Grand Diagonal, but all its great gates were shut. It had an air of death—very odd for so great a commercial community. What did it mean? The porter, who knew the truth, down at the dock, said he was "afraid" that the train had gone. "You know—Sunday," he said. A railway porter appeared. "Lord bless me! First train gone a quarter before—the mail up, you know. Sunday, you see. No train till half-past ten to-night. One train o' Sundays, you see. Mail, up." Here was a blow indeed; to wait till "half-past ten" at night in *that* place—a great com-

mercial place—of a Sunday, and I panting to get on. But it was Sunday, you know.

I went to the Grecian, but the Grecian was gone, or was become the Royal Alexandra, or some such name. I went on to another place not so good. Meanwhile the daylight was coming in slowly, but the streets remained empty. Wonderful in so great a commercial place!

The hotel I had selected was a weakly and failing one. The attendance was of the limpest description. Gradually it became broad day, but at the slowest possible pace. Then was revealed the dismal coffee-room, with a discoloured gamboge paper, that looked glistening and sticky, and to which the corpses of many an indiscreet fly adhered. There were old red and decaying hangings drooping down to the ground and charged with dust. The only objects of furniture to speak of, were two framed and glazed placards, and a sauce-bottle with a brick-red label. One of the placards was the Royal Liver Marine Insurance Company, Limited, with a list of directors and an almost piteous setting forth of the advantages that society had to offer. You might sit for so many hours of the day on barrels of gunpowder, it made no difference. You might embark for the tropics, and be a bishop on the Gold Coast. Then their bonus, and most tempting examples. Thus: A. had insured in the year '45 for a hundred pounds, aged 30. This was only '55, and see what that lucky dog A. was getting already, either a bonus—at his option—of two pounds seventeen and sixpence, or, if he elected to deny himself the bonus, one hundred and twenty pounds at his death. The prospect was set before one in so many appetising ways that it seemed as if an insurer *must* come at last to long for his own death in order to reap such tempting advantages. The other placard was Messrs. Beales and Co., house-furnishing, &c., with pictures of the interior of their "vast warerooms," which seemed to be blocked up with every variety of bedstead, with a Louis Quatorze sort of foreman bowing and explaining matters to a lady and gentleman making purchases. Messrs. Beales mysteriously offered "special advantages to newly married couples" (what could they mean?) and to young housekeepers. There was the red label of the sauce-bottle too, which set forth that the sauce was "prepared from the receipt of a baronet in the country." I am minute about these matters, because they were the only literature in the room, and because through that long long weary weary day when I was driven back upon the place from sheer monotony, some horrid and unaccountable fascination drew me over to study these placards and sauce-bottle. It was Sunday, and there were no daily papers. I came at last to know the placards by heart. The names of the chairman and directors were Samuel Bullock, M.P., Decimus Bagot, William Hipper, Dowson Boglor, and Harvey

Gibson, secretary. Then Messrs. Beales and their "special advantages for newly married couples." I was not a newly married couple, nor even a moiety of a newly married couple; yet somehow I felt as if I were defrauding myself of an unknown blessing, and longed to go and order a bedstead. On another occasion I might have gone up to Messrs. Beales's establishment and seen the Louis Quatorze shopman and had the mystery explained; but this was Sunday.

It dragged on slowly. I went out through the lonely town, went down to the river, where there was a lonely steamer setting off; thought I would go in it, but reflected and came back. I went out again, and came back again. I thought it would never be done. It was a long Sunday, and the longest of Sundays. The strings of people went to church and came back. It began to grow dark, and the bedsteads and the "special advantages for young couples" faded out.

Then went I to the railway station. I found myself there towards nine, with the gas lit and the holiday people coming home. There were more bedsteads, and Messrs. Beales and their young married couples on a gigantic scale, suited to be seen from distant carriages. There was the long platform to walk up and down, and there were the cave-like coach-houses where the coaches were laid up and seemed to be snoozing. This whiled away an hour or so. It was drawing near to mail time. The mail bags were arriving, and it was amusing to watch what was done with them. The interior of the railway post-office, with its pigeon-holes and lamps, looked like the interior of a steamer's saloon or cabin, and the rueful alacrity of the employés suggested passengers going on board. Being up all night, the tossing on the blue cushions, the breaking of day, the cold shiver as the door was opened, the general "creeping" feel as we would roll into town at six, this prospect was too much for me. I shrank from it, and went back to bed in a very mouldy apartment. So the Sunday came to a close at last, and I went away betimes on Monday morning, with the sun shining brightly, and in boisterous spirits.

I have yet one more Sunday—positively the last. The scene is a charming bit of double colour, red brick and green sward on an English high road, or rather in these railway times green lane, with an old tree or two, and a belfry in the roof; and from this I start on a *very* bright Sunday morning, making for a semi-military, semi-nautical settlement some miles away. I have never seen the nautical-military settlement, and do not know the road, so the whole has a prospect of adventure. Adventure there was to be none; but the reader will understand how pleasantly one turns back, for reasons unmeaning as compared with the incidents of other days, to little pictures of this sort. The green lane went up and down, became a high road, with gigs and a stray waggon and a yellow van—there was a race

or a fair somewhere on the Monday—with a two-wheeled show-cart of meaner pretensions; the proprietor of which walked by his vehicle in a Sunday cloak made out of the gaudy and dappled oilcloth which served on profane occasions as his roulette board. There was the blue and the red, and the less fortunate black, and the lucky crown, most gorgeous in its yellow, displayed upon the proprietor's back.

Next, I met "tidy" women, very smart, and their lords in very roomy royal blue dress-coats and brass buttons, and those extra-short double-breasted waistcoats which honest but sorely tempted children of the soil always wear in melodramas. These were distinctly *not* going to church; and I could pardon them for turning aside to the rustic inn, to which you mounted by steps, which had two bow-windows with diamond panes and plenty of flowers, and a sign well on the road, and called the Jolly Waggoner. If it were a little later, I should myself have liked to go up and make the acquaintance of the Jolly Waggoner and his ale. After three or four miles, during which the sun was growing a little strong, and the dust perhaps rather acrimonious in its visits to the eyes, the great river and bridge came in sight. And there, while the spectator leaned on the bridge and looked in every direction, was a view that might sanctify any Sunday morning. A great full river, with that most satisfactory *brimming* fulness which recalled the Rhine, and a noble bridge of many arches, hill-shaped according to the older pattern, and whose piers seemed to stand firmly and confidently in the water and to defy any winter's flood, as if they were great granite calves of legs belonging to a many-legged granite giant, who could stride down the river with ease. At the opposite side was the little old town, and the little old town's ruined castle, and the little old town's houses very much crowded, and forced down to the edge of the water. And then beyond the little old town was the nautico-military town, which climbed up a hill laid out in ancient "lines" and more ancient fosses; and beyond the hill down far below, the river had got in again and was wading under that Sunday's sun, glittering and glistening very far below, with the dockyards at its edge and the great shipbuilding sheds—monster coach-houses, but which now looked like tiny mousetraps. A charming view until modern man stepped in to spoil all, or rather the cruel, rapacious, and ubiquitous London, At-tem and Dashover Railway, which seemed to run amuck through the country, and which hurled a heavy iron trough across the pretty river, and side by side of the pretty bridge. As I looked at its raw lines with disgust, and at its endless rivets, and heard it reverberating and clanging with a passing train, I seemed to hear it say, like an ugly bully, "I've as much right to be here as *you*. I can go beside *you*, if I like, or go any where I like!"

Going on, I entered the little old town, which is all a snake-shaped street, with old rusty inns,

and old posting-yards, and a few old framed houses; their old bones and joints well looked to and kept as fresh as paint could keep them. I liked the way they projected over and covered the pathway, and I liked their gables still more. I went out into the road to have a good stare: to the amazement of the family, who were reading their Bibles on that Sunday morning, and thought the profane stranger might be better employed. Everything looked as bright and clean as a Dutch town, even to the one policeman, who, having little to do, began an affable conversation. Taking another bend, the little old town showed me some genuine red brick houses with yellow stone corners and high French roofs—little Kensingtons, with a delightful old clock that hung out over the street in a mass of florid carving. Behind was a niche, and a flamboyant statue of a naval officer in a wig and gauntlets, pointing, I *know*, to the French—the brave old admiral Sir Cloudesley, in whose honour the red brick tenement had been reared. Further on was a famous almshouse where Six Poor Travellers did get their lodging and fourpences, and which looked snug and clean enough to make one *wish* to be a poor traveller; and further on again was the ancient little theatre, in good repair, with a portico and pillars, and some little dwindled bills on the walls by which I was glad to see that the Theatre Royal was in play. Approaching and reading with interest (much to the disgust of a sour middle-aged lady with her husband and boy, who was making uncharitable Sabbatarian remarks), I find that Mr. GEORGE JENBY, the eminent character actor and vocalist, would "give two nights," in this

HIS NATIVE TOWN.

He was to be assisted by "Miss Marion Jenby, of the London Concerts;" by "Miss Susan Jenby, of the London and Ealing Concerts;" by Mr. William Jenby on "this occasion only," who was of no concerts at all; and by "the Infant Marie Jenby." The programme was "rich and varied," including Miss Marion Jenby in her great character song of the "Battle of the Alma," which was subdivided into "The Advance, Charge of the Heavy Brigade! Quick step, they run! Prodigies of valour! The Naval Brigade; England's Wooden Walls;" the two latter headings I suspected to be specially introduced as adroit compliments to the dockyards. Wishing Jenby and his family all success, and being really worked into sympathy by the quotations concerning coming home at last, with which William Jenby ended his bill, "As the hare whom hounds and horse pursue, Pants to the spot from which at first it flew!" I passed on, and began to meet soldiers. Then I heard sounds of an organ coming out of a pretty little building, and found my middle-aged lady, her husband and boy, peeping in at the door with disgust and alarm. For doing the same, I find this to be a chapel full of Irish soldiers, which, having a stained-glass window, looked very tranquil and cool and inviting of

that Sunday morning. But if I were to tell all I saw on that pleasant Sunday morning, I should grow tedious—and so I stop here.

THE SECOND MRS. TILLOTSON.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "NEVER FORGOTTEN."

BOOK IV.

CHAPTER XVI. A VISITOR.

AFTER Mr. Tillotson's City dinner, the scene of their life moves on with a sort of monotony. But that morning seemed to have been the last of the bright unclouded days which had set in for him, and about which he had such a distrust. Those who knew him began to remark the backward motion, and saw, with pain, the clouds beginning to gather again.

Mrs. Tillotson had passed a troubled night. Before morning the conviction had grown upon her that some evil was advancing on them, and that this old mystery, so often pointed to and hinted at, might now be brought to light with danger and perhaps disgrace. Else what did it all mean? We hear men accuse themselves passionately, and tell us they are guilty sinners; but over such declaration always seems an air of exaggeration from penitence. But it is different when other men make the charges. It sounds more practical and serious. Something, too, that Grainger had said to her came back on her very often. "And did he not tell *you* at the time of the marriage? No, of course not. That you could scarcely ask *him*." From that night a weight began to oppress her, as if this might turn out to be some dreadful and destructive mystery.

When she was sitting in her drawing-room thinking a little sadly over these things, Mr. Tillotson entered a little abruptly. He was going off to his office. His old gentleness had come back. "That was a miserable night last night, and I was fretful and hasty. But I could not endure such another. Do be indulgent and pity me. We cannot have *him* coming here again, or any of his friends. I have done all I could, and can do no more."

Sweet comfort and pity came into his face; for she answered at once: "He behaved cruelly, unkindly, wickedly. No, you shall never see him any more. Indeed, I could not ask you. You have been too kind."

"I?" he answered, hastily. "I have never wished to see him but for your sake. What I mean is, he must not come to this house, or be seen here. I cannot endure his insolence. I *must* ask you to agree to this. Indeed, it is not much, and only due to our own dignity."

"To be sure," she said. "And he shall never enter it; though—" She stopped suddenly and looked down; for at that moment rushed on her all the dangers of such an exclusion, and the fury which such a step would work him up to. "I think," she said, hesitatingly, "just as yet, while he is in this state, and we are the only people who have influence over him—"

After all, he is not naturally wicked, and Mr. Grainger *has* some power."

Mr. Tillotson looked at her a moment with a strange expression, then suddenly turned away. "It was not much to ask," he said, with a bitter and wounded tone. "I only can say what I wish. You can, of course, do what you please."

"What does this mean?" she said, with soft reproach; "what change is this coming on? Dearest husband, this is for *you*."

"Change!" he said, "there is no change. I only go back to my old state, the state it was folly for me to have given up. I say again, I do not wish that man or his friend to be seen here again. You are free to do as you wish."

"Anything you please," she said.

Another day went slowly by in a dreamy irresolution, until towards the afternoon Martha stood before her. "That gentleman's below again," she said. "The gentlemen visitors are coming plentifully now-a-days."

This woman had a sort of privilege, and these grim speeches were but a part of herself. But Mrs. Tillotson had an instinct who this was. "I cannot see him—see *any* one," she said. "Send him away."

She shook her head. "He will not go for *me*," she said.

"I beg your pardon, Mrs. Tillotson," said a voice at the door. "You will excuse me, I know; but recollect that this was part of our arrangement last night. I was at your party, and they treated me like a servant. If I went away *then*, it was only to put the matter off till this morning. Now you can go down," he said, turning to Martha. "What are you waiting for?"

He took a chair, then closed the door, and sat down by her. "Now," he said, "let us see our way, and let us understand each other. Dear me, how charming old England is, after all; and old London, too, above all. Only think how it must seem to a town man after fifteen years among their wretched mangy foreign places. How sick I have been of them, pining to get back here. But what could I do?"

She looked at him, wondering.

"Ask your husband the reason. He is accountable for it all, and for much more. If I had come home all that time, I should have come home a beggar; for a little allowance that was made me by a cruel mother would have been withdrawn if I had. Only fancy, an elder son, John Eastwood, of Eastwood, 'cut off,' as they call it, with two hundred a year, and his whole fine estate handed over to a younger brother, all of which madness I owe to *your* husband."

"What does all this mean?" she said, half rising. "Why do you speak to me in this way? I do not want to listen to you. You wish to assume some power over us—"

"Well, if you like," he said, rising, "I shall go straight to his bank; it will be more profitable to me, and less pleasant to you. And if you have ever heard of such a thing as a skeleton in a cupboard, I vow to Heaven your hus-

band will bring you to-day from his bank a skeleton that will haunt this house till your dying day. Give your orders, Mrs. Tillotson. I am a gentleman by birth and education, and don't want to hector or terrify you, or make terms like a vulgar ruffian. But as I live and breathe, and on my solemn honour, what I tell you is true, and that is true, it will be the most miserable day in your new-married life if I go to the bank now, and even let myself be seen by Tillotson. There."

There was such earnestness in what he said, that it brought conviction, but with a chill.

"But what is all this about?" she said, in a mournful voice. "What is this secret?"

He shook his head. "Seriously," he said, gravely and respectfully, "it would not do to tell you. You would not wish it yourself. You see, the whole is in a mess; but I cannot help it. I have had a miserable time. I have been ruined through the business and through him. As I say, I was born and bred a gentleman, and I don't want to have the looks of extorting, and having 'silence purchased,' and that sort of thing. But what can I do? As it is, I am doing wonders—for me. I suppose, if I walked to him straight, it would be the best course for me. But I don't want to make or bring confusion. I must live. If something moderate is got for me, I shall be quite content, which, recollect, all this time is a *debt*; for it was he and *his business* that brought ruin on me, and it is fair that he should make up for it. In fact, I have behaved with the greatest delicacy all through. I thought for years that he had become only a poor clerk in a bank. Judge of my astonishment when I heard that he was a millionaire rolling in wealth. Well, now, to business, Mrs. Tillotson. What can you do for me?"

When he was gone, she thought of her unailing resource. She hurried to the dear captain. The captain looked very grave. "Well," he said, "of course, there could be no harm in that, you know. Poor Tillotson has had so much misery and worry in his short life, that, egad, I'd give a few guineas myself to get him peace. No, we mustn't let this fellow see him; not that we mind his old woman's stories, you know, but just for peace sake. I tell you what," said the captain, as if a brilliant discovery had come to him, "leave it to me; put it into my hands *altogether*. If there's a man in the world who can deal with fellows of that sort, I can. Don't say a word more," said the captain. "I'll make the rhino go twice as far as you would, my dear. It doesn't do for you to be mixed up in such a business; not that there's anything in it. But, after all, peace and quiet is better than gold. Now, what is he to get? Leave it all to me. I'll go off and see him at once."

Not without serious remonstrance and danger of an entire rupture of the business did the captain agree to any assistance; as to the pecuniary part, she brought down her little store. With a hundred or a hundred and fifty the captain

said he'd manage the whole thing "easy." Grief and terror again came into her face. But two or three days before her husband had given her fifty pounds "to pay for pins and ribbons."

"Leave it to me, my dear," said the captain. "We can put fifty to the back of it easy. It'll do splendid." But to this she would not agree, and so it was at last agreed—as she insisted—that on that night she would send the captain more money.

CHAPTER XVII. MRS. TILLOTSON RAISES MONEY.

NEXT day their usual cold formal ride took place. With some constraint and confusion, Mrs. Tillotson said: "I know you are so good to me always, and so indulgent, you never refuse me. I have been very extravagant—no, not that—but I am going to be very extravagant, and I would have you to help me—will you?"

Some of the old pleasure came into his face. "I am delighted," he said, "that you come to me in this way. This is what I like. When we get home, we shall settle how large it shall be; and to-morrow we shall drive to the bank together."

But as he rode, and before they got home, he grew silent. He was always all but thrusting money on her, and nothing so delighted him as the rare occasions when she had come to him. But it was only two days ago that she asked for money, and now she asked again. And over this he began to grow silent and to brood; and by the end of the ride, when he was lifting her off her horse, he had built on it a mountain of suspicion, and sadly converted what he had hailed with delight into a fresh source of disquiet.

Just before dinner she came in to him. "If you could spare it to me now," she said, with a smile. "I have heard you quote some Latin about *his dat.*"

"To be sure," he said, fetching out his cheque-book. "How much?"

"A great deal," she said, "a very great deal. I am ashamed to name it."

"Nonsense," he said, writing. "This," he added, looking at her, "is some pressing fellow, or Madame Adelaide. Why do you let them press you?"

"No," she said, hastily; "this is a private little extravagance—a secret, a very great secret. We all have our little debts, or, I mean, expenses."

He then said, abruptly, "How much?" "Well then," she said, "a very great deal, I fear. Would a hundred—"

He filled it in. "There," he said. "Surely you know," he added, gravely, "there is no complaint in these matters, or should not be. With an income like ours, you are *entitled* by right to your share, without coming to me in this way. And observe, don't suppose, for a moment, that I wish to know how you spend it. I have no right or title in the world. There, so recollect that. The bank is your bank as well as mine."

She hung her head. "O, if you knew, dear husband," she said, then stopped irresolutely.

His face lit up. "Ah," he said, "this is for some of your good noble charities. That secret angelic work of yours, which I know of old. To be sure; forgive me. But——"

She shook her head. "No, I cannot let you think that," she said; and she went away. She heard his deep sigh.

Presently she came back. "I had forgot; it is too late now. The banks are all closed, and this cheque can be of no use to-night."

"What," he said, a little bitterly, "is it so pressing as that?"

"I want it to-night," she said, desperately, "I do indeed. Forgive me for this, but——"

"Forgive you," he said—"forgive you, my dear! How strangely you talk, for wishing to have gold instead of a cheque. Nonsense; we can send out and have it cashed somewhere," and he rang the bell. But all the shops were closed.

Sitting below in his study, he did very little business that night. Towards nine he found his lamp growing dim, and rang the bell for his servant. The study door was opened by Martha. "Take this lamp away," he said, a little pettishly. "None of you mind your work. Look at the way it is burning. Stay, why didn't *he* come up?"

"The mistress," she answered, solemnly, "had sent him out of a message, and with a letter. She was most particular about it, as there was money——"

"I see," said he; then paused. Then very irresolutely, and with an affectation of displeasure, "And where has he gone at this time of night?"

He waited anxiously for the answer.

"To the captain's. The captain sent here twice this evening."

"Ah! I see," he said—not to Martha, but in reference to something that he said himself. "I see; perfectly."

What he saw was, that the captain never wanted money for himself, and would have died rather than have asked it, except from a man like General Cameron. Therefore the captain was useful as an agent.

Martha went on: "Indeed, we had company enough here to-day. A strange gentleman that sat near an hour."

"Mr. Grainger?" he said, eagerly.

"No, no," she said, "but a friend of his, and the captain was here with him. Very pretty goings on, while the master's at the bank."

"Martha!"

"Ah! she, the poor little soul that they put to rest in the heathen country, there was no trouble of *that* sort with her. Ah! if *she*'d been understood properly; but she wasn't, and it's too late now. There's Watson back. He's been away an hour."

"Send him to me."

Watson came, and took the lamp with all respect and many excuses. He'd have sent the groom, but the mistress was so particular.

And the captain had to write a letter, which he asked him to leave, and be very careful of, which he had done; "as I knew, sir, you wished the captain to be obliged in everything. Then the captain had written another letter for the mistress."

"You did quite right, Watson," said Mr. Tillotson. "Leave it here. She will be down herself."

It was not a letter, only a scrap of paper half twisted up. It was in his hand; and, indeed, it all but unfolded of itself. There was, besides, the legal fiction of husband and wife "being one," and the moral rule of their "having no secrets" from each other. There was no question of "breaking the seal" or "opening a letter."

It was a very short struggle. He rang the bell, and sent it up to her.

The note which the captain had written was to the following effect:

"My dear. It's all right. I told you I was the boy for the business. He has taken the hundred and fifty, and is off to the country. Yours,
"T. D."

But the good captain had not mentioned that his own fifty "had gone to the back of that." "Ah, the creature, when I come to want it one of these days, I shall tell Tillotson; and it'll be time enough then."

Thus some two or three weeks more went by, and the cloud deepened all the while over that house. Mr. Tillotson's face began to draw back every day nearer and nearer to the old dreamy gloomy pattern, to the infinite concern of his friends. Meantime they went their usual round of life. A wistful look had come into *her* face, but they went out together to the festivities given in honour of so important a being as the head of the great bank. And in due course arrived a sort of Lord Mayor's card from Mrs. Bunnett, announcing that that City lady would be "At Home," with "Dancing," in a few days.

Mr. Tillotson said to his wife in his gentle voice, "We must go, of course. It will amuse you, and I hope you will make a fine show there, and that you have a splendid dress."

"You are too kind," she said, softly. "But I am well provided, too well." She stopped irresolutely, and came up to him. "I have done something wrong," she said, "and you are angry with me. But I did not mean it; indeed, no. We were so happy, but now——"

"You?" he said, sadly. "No. I have not complained, have I? No; you are everything that a good wife could be. I have no right to say a word."

"Ah! but you are changed. I see you are; and you have some reason which you will not tell; and yet I declare solemnly, as I stand here, that I know of nothing, unless, indeed, that unfortunate Ross——But if you only knew——"

The hard look came to his face again. "Have I made any complaint?" he said. "I repeat, you

are everything a husband could wish. Could you ask for a handsomer testimonial?" he added, trying to smile. "No; I am odd, strange, eccentric, given to humour—now in good spirits, now the reverse. *You* have an equable turn of temper, to be envied. That is a blessing; but it is my misfortune and fault."

She was going with a deep sigh, when he called her back softly. "Now," said he, "about this ball. You must be splendid. So to oblige me," he added, taking his cheque-book, "you must have this." And he began to "fill in" rapidly for two hundred; a "little bonus," he called it.

It was the day of the Bunnett ball, in the afternoon, when Mr. Tillotson was at the bank, and his wife had ordered her carriage expressly to visit Madame Adelaide, when she heard a step on the stair, and Mr. Tilney, an unfrequent visitor now, came in hurriedly.

"My dear child, here's a business," he said. "I saw the carriage at the door, but I knew you were in. I declare I don't know what we are coming to, or where the world is going to end!" And Mr. Tilney dropped into a chair, and looked round with a really worried and hopeless expression.

She asked him calmly, "What is it, dear father? I am prepared for anything."

"What is it?" repeated he; "what should it be? The old quarter, you may be sure! That fellow Ross, that disgrace to us all, who'll end on the gallows—mark my words! on the gallows tree, as sure—as sure as you spell my name with a T."

She turned a little pale. "And what has happened now?"

"What has he done?—disgraced us, ruined us all, pointed the finger of scorn as we go by. Only think, a gentleman, and a gentleman's son, dragged away by common bailiffs to a common sponging-house. No effects, no assets, nothing to meet the law, and then writes to me telling me to send him—let me see," added Mr. Tilney, taking a letter out of his pocket to be strictly accurate, "one hundred and ninety-eight pounds ten shillings (one-hundred-and-eighty-eight), to satisfy the detainer and costs."

"Poor, unfortunate, miserable Ross," said she, with sympathy; "always from one misfortune to another. What is to become of him?"

"You know, my dear, the idea of coming to me was ludicrous, simply ludicrous. I laughed again when I read—I, with all *my* claims. Not to be thought of. But the idea flashed on me at once like an injunction. You and Tillotson were obviously the quarter from which relief should come. And see," added Mr. Tilney, in a ruminative way, "see the delicacy of the fellow after all. He had a natural repugnance to trespass on his old flame, and as for Tillotson, I can quite understand his not thinking of him."

"But how can I help him?" she said, distractedly; "where can I get so much money? I cannot ask my husband; no, I cannot. He has given me money to-day already. Indeed, no."

Mr. Tilney smiled with great satisfaction. "See how things fall out. There you are, you see, like a miracle."

"But this was for a particular purpose," she said. "Dear father, you don't see the difficulty."

"Well, devote this money to him, and get more for the particular purpose. I know Tillotson. I'll answer for him. He is munificent in his ideas, absolutely. Just go to him and tell him the whole; or shall I?"

Long she thought it over. There was deep pity in her heart for this unhappy, most miserable being, whose days seemed doomed to misfortune, and for whose misfortunes she herself was not a little accountable. At last she came to a resolve; she thought it a duty to send what she had. Later, she could mention it to her husband—in a week, say. She sent away her two hundred pound cheque to the direction given her by Mr. Tilney.

Madame Adelaide had surpassed herself. As Mrs. Tillotson stood in her drawing-room, one of the most brilliant figures that could be conceived, her dress rich with tulle and laces, and lit up with the faint colouring of a delicate mauve ribbon. There were diamonds which nestled in the bouquets of tulle; and above, the gorgeous golden hair was reflected softly and richly in the glasses of the room. Mr. Tillotson looked at her with admiration, and said, with a sort of pride, "This is what I wished you to do;" then sighed deeply. "You have put that little sum to the best uses; you must come to me to-morrow again. You do not ask *half* enough."

Suddenly she clasped her hands. "O, then, if you would! I do not want it so much, but—"

His face grew cold and contracted. "We shall be late," he said, "and the carriage is waiting."

CHAPTER XVIII. THE BUNNETT BALL.

MRS. BUNNETT's ball was "done in really first-class style," as one of her friends described it. The house was in a Bayswater square, built specially for Bunnett by a City architect, who had "turned out" many an insurance office and warehouse with the "true palatial effect"—that is, once conceding that great surfaces of plate-glass, and abundant carvings, and a series of architectural sentry-boxes, make up the ideal of palatial effect. The house was sumptuous, with gardens and a porch and a showy greenhouse full of the rarest plants, "brought special from Bulmer," as the friend, Nelgrove, took care to tell every one. The house was full of statues and pictures. On this night the house was illuminated from top to bottom, and the pretty sort of lantern which was on the top of the stairs was lit up in a "ravishing" manner. Everywhere along the stairs and passages were the exotics from Bulmer. Part of the garden had been taken in, covered over with an awning, lit with Chinese lanterns, and literally piled with plants and flowers "from Bulmer." As you came up-stairs or went down,

and met the City gentlemen with the City ladies on their arms, the conversation, flagging a little as it sometimes did, recovered animation by an allusion to the shrubs "got up from Bulmer." An alcove had been thrown out from the windows, all but masked by profuse shrubbery from Bulmer; and here, apparently as from a grove, came the strains of "Vost's" band, the sad and winding waltz, the brisk galop, and the more measured quadrille. It was remarkable about these melodies that they were all from the inspiration of "Vost" himself, his musicians not being able to deal with other music.

Now came in Mr. and Mrs. Tillotson, the City exquisites, some of them of a rich Jewish tone in their faces, turning to study the brilliant lady who stood there. Excellent foils, indeed, were the stout, magnificent, but vulgar City dames who herded together. Mr. Bunnett came to meet them with a little pride; for they were a link between West and East Ends. The heavy yellow hair of Mrs. Tillotson glistened in the lights, and the little tinge of sadness in her face added to her beauty. But for such men as Mr. Bunnett, who were well meaning and good natured, she always had a sort of charity.

"You must show me your charming rooms," she said, kindly. "I hear everything is done with such wonderful taste."

Mrs. Bunnett, had she been by, would have preferred a compliment to the lavish magnificence of everything. As it was, Mr. Nelgrove was close behind.

"Poor Bulmer," he said. "Mrs. Tillotson, I suppose he hasn't left a twig in it. It's a howling wilderness at this moment, stripped right and left. I suppose to-morrow he could find a single geranium leaf—ch? You know it's true, Bunnett."

That gentleman smiled at this flattery. "There's enough left to get you a booky, Mrs. Tillotson."

The great Jackson was there, looking like an overgrown butler. He was principally in a corner all the night with some members of the board. "I go out to parties for business," he said, with a fair attempt at epigram, "and go to the office for pleasure." He had a "great thing coming out," and which he was hinting at all the night. It was seen by his face that he was hugging himself over this secret, and great exertions were made to extract it from him. He was implored, beseeched. A Jewish friend or two became almost pathetic. At last, in a corner, he consented to hint at a sort of outline. At Madrid, a scheme had been formed for a central railway station. Daring companies were to bring all the lines together in a focus, and "a concession" had been secured, but this was all "dark," it would be understood. His society, the Universal Railway Roofing Company, were to have the job—a roof that would make all men gasp. Seven railways were to meet, the whole to be in the form of a star-fish or fan. So many thousand tons of iron to be employed. A government guarantee was in treaty; but that, on the whole, would

rather hamper them. The thing was, which company was to "bring it out." One, whose name he imparted under the back of his hand, were making stupendous offers; but then he felt that *he*—though not the Universal Railway Roofing Company—was bound more or less to the Foncier. However, they could talk of that again.

The night meanwhile was speeding on. Supper had set in, which was another field of display for magnificence. Nelgrove's voice was heard in the crowd that was battling to get to the table. "Those pheasants *all* came up from Bulmer this morning. D'y'e see that melon? it's not a pumpkin, I can assure you. *He* got that up from Bulmer, grapes, everything you see, all from Bulmer." But to the proprietor his tone was in the old disparaging style. "I suppose *he* was down at the markets himself yesterday, trying to pick up a bird or two—a bargain, you know. Look, Mrs. Henwitcher, look at those peaches. He knows a lord or two in the country, and he gets me to write to them when he gives a party, to beg a few peaches or so. He can't afford a hot-house at Bulmer *as yet*, you know. Ha! ha!"

Mrs. Henwitcher was delighted. "Go along," she said. "Why, he 'ave 'ot'ouses; you know you 'ave, Mr. Bunnett."

"O, nothing to speak of; very small. Now this I have got, a first-rate gardener, who came to me from Lord——"

"Get me some pheasant," said she, "like a good creature. I want to taste the Bulmer birds. 'Enwitcher told me he never see such a lovely place as Bulmer. Never."

"We must get you down there, ma'am," said Mr. Bunnett, graciously. "We have a little wall-fruit and a few flowers. Bless me, there are the Tillotsons going."

They were, and were paying their adieux, Mr. Tillotson with some little exhilaration in his face. He had overheard some of the admiration excited by his beautiful wife. He had watched her figure as it moved through the room. He had seen the young officers asking to be introduced to her. He was a little proud, and as every fresh homage was paid to her, he had seen that brilliant face turned towards *him*, as if wishing that *he* should have his share in all.

As they were getting in the carriage, he said to her:

"I was indeed proud of you to-night. You looked divine."

As they entered the house, Martha came to him with "Mr. Ross has been here twice," news that brought a sort of chill to both their hearts. Before the hall door was closed, they heard hasty steps, and Ross came tramping up into the hall. He had been walking up and down the street, waiting for them to come in. It was about half-past one in the morning. He was wild-eyed as usual, and his face was flushed.

"Now," said he, "Tillotson, I have met you at last, after a couple of hours' wait. Come

into the parlour. I must speak a word to the *happy pair* before they retire."

"I can't see you," said Mr. Tillotson, in a voice trembling. "You have no right to come into this house. I warned you already."

"Go, go," said she, imploringly. "Why do you come here in this way?"

"To see *him*," he said, pointing fiercely, "and to tell *him* that I want none of his compliments or his infernal patronising or pauper relief, and that I despise it, and that I won't *have* it. *That's* what I've come for."

She turned very pale now. Mr. Tillotson looked at him, then at her.

"I say," he went on, in a louder voice, "I shall *not* have it. How dare you attempt it? I know the game and the policy of it—to make me helpless by 'loading me with favours.' The good and the just man! But I won't *have* your clemency or help. I despise it. And I tell you, Tillotson, to your face, it's shabby, mean, contemptible, and despicable, to try and get such an advantage over me in my misfortunes."

"What does this mean?" said Mr. Tillotson, sadly, and turning to his wife. "What am I to do with this endless persecution?"

She said nothing, but stood there overcome, overpowered, and with her hands clasped and eyes cast on the ground.

"I fling it back," said Ross, stamping furiously. "One more week, and the courts shall have decided for me. Yes. I *know* it. I'll foil you in that way—you and your patronising of me, as if I were a common pauper that you were relieving. What a charitable lord to come and release me from a jail! I can tell you, I had loads of friends that would have done as much—and more! After all, it's not very much to lie under the weight of an obligation for a week, for a wretched two hundred pounds!"

Mr. Tillotson started. "Two hundred pounds!" he exclaimed. Then his eyes lit up. "Ah! what is this?" he said, turning to Mrs. Tillotson. "Could it be? So this is what you have done?"

In dreadful agitation she ran to him, almost sinking down before him. "O, forgive me," she said. "I meant to explain it, and I *can* explain it all. He was in misery, they told me—arrested—and I dare not ask you—"

He smiled bitterly. "Dare not ask me! It only wanted that! But why make any business of this?" he said, calmly, and turning to Ross. "You see now I am quite innocent in the matter. There is the benefactress and liberator you have to thank. I knew nothing of it."

Ross looked from one to the other with fierce eyes, then burst into one of his loud laughs. "This is flattering," he said. "My dear, sweet cousin is true to me, after all. So it was you, was it? O, this is getting rich. I am very

glad to hear it. With all your arts and tricks, Tillotson, you haven't turned her against me yet. No, nor never shall. And you know you made a mistake, and stepped in where you had neither law nor right to step in. And now it's coming against you. My dear child, God bless you for your humanity, and taking me out of jail, like St. Paul, and our poor Tillotson all in the dark the whole time!" And he pointed to him, and again laughed his harsh laugh.

But Mr. Tillotson did not hear or heed him. His eyes were upon that pale and shrinking figure, that seemed to sink more and more to the earth every instant.

"I may go now," said Ross. "This was well worth walking up and down the street for! It was indeed! It's a weight off my mind. 'Pon my soul, I couldn't have slept, thinking I owed *you* such an obligation. But with *her* it is different. Recollect, she was pledged to me from a child—*my* property, waiting *my* time and place—letters, my friend, letters that you never got or never saw, and then *you* come with your melancholy madness, and step in shabbily when I was far off. Serve you right! Serve you right! Reap as you sow, my friend. Good night!"

He was at last gone, and that scene ended. From that night (and the night of Mr. Bunnett's ball was long talked of in the City, and the presence there of "an uncommonly fine young woman whom Tillotson had just married, and with whom he was as happy as a king—'Gad, my boy, you or I would change places with him!')—from that we may conceive what a widening gulf there was between husband and wife. She had sunk down before him, and in those musical accents had protested to Heaven that it was for *his* sake that she had concealed that little matter, and for no other reason in the wide world. And this explanation he had accepted with the mournful acceptance that was habitual to him. He had lost confidence, and with confidence had lost everything. To that night (the night of Mr. Bunnett's ball, when everything came up from Bulmer) both husband and wife looked back with a shudder. Meanwhile, Ross's news was almost correct, and the great Appeal Case was to be presently decided, not in a week, as he had said, but in about three weeks' time.

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